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The Development of the Media in Moldova and European Integration: Political Pressure and Lack of Will

Recent opinion polls confirm that the media in Moldova continue to enjoy a relatively high degree of public trust with 60% of respondents claiming to believe in the media to at least “a certain” extent and ranking them ahead of all other institutions (apart from the church) in terms of trustworthiness. However, since the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) came to power in 2001, international media watchdogs have noted a decline in media freedoms.

Compared with the first post-independence decade when newly emerging private media outlets played a noteworthy role in shaping public discourse, Moldova has in recent years seen relative media pluralism give way to a more restricted media landscape featuring attacks on investigative journalists, the closure of “inconvenient” media outlets and outright bias on the part of government-controlled media outlets. Even though the Moldovan authorities agreed to strengthen media freedoms in the European Union (EU) - Moldova Action Plan signed in 2005, they are still far from tackling this issue with any degree of seriousness.

Weakened by years of political and economic pressure, the media in Moldova are therefore not in a position to serve the public interest by pushing for democratic reforms or better government policies. Until this happens, Moldova will struggle to deepen its ties with the EU or to ensure the sort of political and economic changes needed for a sustainable and significant increase in living standards.

From High Goals to Low Scores

The PCRM's victory in both parliamentary and presidential elections in 2001 brought about a rapid deterioration in the working environment faced by journalists in Moldova. Two years into the PCRM's tenure, a report by Freedom House criticized an increase in self-censorship and an increase in lawsuits brought against journalists as well as the lack of editorial independence of the public broadcaster Teleradio-Moldova (TRM). One year later, Freedom House (2004) downgraded Moldovan media from partly free to not free as a result of tightening government control over TRM and increasing pressure on independent newspapers. The 2005 report by Freedom House was similarly negative criticising the pro-government bias of the public broadcaster, an attack on

an investigative journalist (see below), attempts to close down two independent broadcasters and the failure to fix a ceiling on libel fines for media outlets.

During the PCRM's first term in office, other international groups also began to raise the alarm. The Media Sustainability Index that is produced by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) revealed in 2004 that most private media suffered from financing problems that left them highly susceptible to editorial interference by domestic political forces. IREX noted other factors also hindering the development of the Moldovan media including a lack of experienced managers and a lingering, Soviet-era perception of the press as a propaganda tool. Another well-known press organisation, Reporters without Borders, reported in 2006 that Moldova had fallen eleven places from the previous year to 85th place worldwide in terms of media freedoms, almost 30 places behind neighbouring Romania.

Moldovan non-government organisations (NGOs) have echoed these international criticisms. In recent years, frequent calls have been heard for more solidarity among journalists and for the authorities to ensure respect for the freedom of expression, access to information and the transparency of public institutions. Through public statements, protest marches and memoranda, Moldovan media NGOs have tried to persuade the government to refrain from practices that have become all too common and that have ensured a high degree of censorship within both the public and private media: denying accreditation for uncooperative media, issuing specific orders to journalists on what events to cover, arbitrary sackings and using news content as a tool to pursue party political gains (www.ijc.md).

Public Broadcasting: the Government's Mouthpie

Both Moldovan and international observers agree that the government's failure to transform TRM from a propaganda instrument into a genuine, independent public broadcaster is by far the most pressing issue on the media landscape. TRM is the most widely watched news provider and the only station with nationwide reach which gives it huge importance: almost three quarters of respondents in a May poll listed television as their primary news source (IPP 2007) while over half the respondents in the same poll named TRM as their

most trusted media source. The government's failure to open up the company to opposition parties and other alternative viewpoints is therefore of critical concern.

The pressure to reform TRM first began to intensify in early 2002 when 500 employees launched a work-to-rule strike in protest over censorship and bias at the company. The first declaration issued by the Anti-Censorship Committee (February 2002) set up by the striking journalists stated that, "Despite its proclaimed public status, the company continues to promote news coverage that defies all ethical standards. There is no differentiation between news and opinion, and public debates and political talk-shows are discouraged." The protesters also said they were outraged by management's attempts to make company employees join pro-PCR trade unions, and that ongoing harassment had "killed" freedom of expression and the will of employees to report in a professional manner. Several news reporters, editors and producers taking part in the strike were dismissed.

The strike by TRM employees intensified the international spotlight on Moldova's media problems. In April 2002, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) issued a statement calling on the Moldovan leadership, "...to embark without delay on work to transform Teleradio-Moldova into an independent public corporation" in order to end censorship and to ensure that representatives of opposition parties were able to take part in televised debates. PACE's demands met with a hostile reception from Moldovan authorities. The country's president and CPRM leader, Vladimir Voronin, stated that he would not allow state television and radio to be transformed into public institutions and suggested that those who wanted a public broadcaster "should launch a new one." Mr Voronin claimed that "as a citizen," he had reservations about the Council of Europe's recommendations, while communist members of Parliament (MPs) said the recommendations ignored "Moldovan realities" (IJC 2002).

Although combined international and domestic pressure forced Parliament to adopt a law on reforming TRM in the summer of 2004, concrete improvements at the broadcaster have been minimal. Independent media monitoring has showed no significant improvements in terms of editorial independence or an end to pro-government bias. The authorities continue to ensure that their own videos of stories on Parliament, the Presidency and other government institutions are regularly inserted into news programmes, and the company's overall editorial policy remains subject to a large amount of political pressure. The Moldovan authorities seem unrepentant about the lack of reform at TRM. The

Prime Minister, Vasile Tarlev, has suggested that it would be unfair for the public to be "less and less informed about the great achievements of the central authorities" and has claimed that an agreement was reached with TRM's president to establish exactly what should be broadcast about the government (Info Prim Neo 2007).

International representatives have stressed, at least in private discussions, that Mr Tarlev's statements go against European standards and the media reform commitments undertaken by Moldova in its Action Plan signed with the EU. More publicly, the international community has continued to voice deep reservations about the state of media freedoms in Moldova. For example, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Moldova has expressed concern about the pace of reforms at TRM which, "...has made almost no progress towards becoming a truly independent public service broadcaster since its formal transformation in August 2004" and has urged the newly elected Supervisory Board to, "...lose no more time in initiating fundamental and visible changes in the way the broadcaster reflects public and political life in the country" (OSCE 2007). At the time of both the 2005 parliamentary election and the 2007 local elections, the international community similarly echoed the concerns of domestic NGOs that the national broadcaster was being used to promote the ruling party and to weaken its political opponents.

Formal Access to Information and Weak Pluralism

Moldova's implementation of the Law on Access to Information also remains problematic. The law was widely lauded when it was passed in May 2000. Moldova was the first country in the Commonwealth of Independent States to pass such a law, and it was hoped that the act would encourage more investigative journalism and thereby increase the transparency of official decision making. However, the government has been reluctant to allocate the funds or to appoint the personnel needed for the law to work. In a 2006 survey entitled "The Mirage of Transparency," the Centre for the Promotion of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information concluded that public officials still did not know the content of the law or were simply ignoring the law in an effort to cover up their professional inactivity. Although officials were no longer merely refusing to release information as they had in the first years following the passage of the law, they were now relying on a set of formal answers to requests for information that effectively ensured the same result.

In recent years the Moldovan authorities have frequently used various forms of economic pressure to restrict media pluralism. Independent media outlets have seen their finances

limited through lost advertising revenue that the government redirects towards more docile media and the need to pay excessive fees to the state publishing house and the monopoly press distributor, The Post of Moldova. They have also suffered from arbitrary licence annulments and hefty fines for alleged defamation. These tactics have resulted in either the closure of many media outlets or a rise in self-censorship. It is worrisome that three TV channels and four radio stations declined to cover the 2005 general elections or to broadcast any form of election advertising.

A number of high-profile attempts to limit media pluralism have in particular sparked both domestic and international criticism. The most recent of these came at the end of 2006 when Moldovan media NGOs strongly criticised the application of the country's audio-visual code to two public stations with anti-communist editorial policies that largely favoured a leader of one opposition party. The authorities arbitrarily closed, Antena-C and Euro-TV in December 2006 before proceeding with their non-transparent sale to new owners who proceeded to cut staff levels sharply despite calls from diplomatic missions to ensure, "...the continued functioning of both broadcasters, drawing on their experienced staffs." The OSCE Mission noted at the time that, "...the immediate reduction in news and information programming at Antena-C and the change in its broadcasting schedule following privatization... show a disregard for these recommendations" (OSCE 2007). Media NGOs said the decision adopted in a non-transparent way by Parliament was politically dictated with no connection to professional media development (www.azi.md 2006).

The controversy surrounding Antena-C and Euro-TV came in the wake of other disturbing efforts by the authorities to limit media space. In June 2005, the government cited a "lack of financial resources" in its decision to close the public news agency Info-Prim that had been based in Chişinău town hall and was seen as sympathetic to the capital's opposition mayor, Serafim Urechean. The treatment of Info-Prim contrasted with that of two relatively more loyal state media newspapers, *Moldova Suverna* and *Nezavisimaia Moldova* a few months earlier. Under pressure from international and national media organisations, the government had agreed to relinquish its control of these newspapers. However, it then continued to permit them to remain in their existing offices and appears to have done little to ensure an independent editorial stance on the part of either publication. The two still publish glowing articles about the President, the parliamentary speaker and the Prime Minister along with editorials praising official policies.

The authorities have further ensured a favourable media reception by allowing local authorities to re-establish 25 Soviet-type, subsidized newspapers in recent years. By November 2005 this had triggered calls from the Association of Independent Press (AIP) to guarantee equal opportunities for private publications. After its members were repeatedly denied access to local-government events, the AIP also urged the country's leadership to ensure free access to information for all media (AIP 2006).

Excessive fines for "defamation" are another feature of Moldova's media scene. A high-profile incident came in

A press conference, where a group of NGOs made public their opinions regarding the Antena-C and Euro-TV situation.

*From right to left:
Ion Bunduchi, Electronic Press Association APEL,
Corina Cepoi, IJC,
Petru Macovei, AIP,
Vasile Spinei, Acces Info.
Chişinău, January, 2007*



July 2005 when the courts ordered *Moldavskie Vedomosti*, a Russian-language opposition newspaper, to pay \$2,000 (or more than 50 times the minimum monthly salary) for defaming the director of the government-owned Moldovan railroad company. The newspaper had disclosed irregularities and abuses alleged to have occurred during the renovation of the company's headquarters. *Moldavskie Vedomosti* appealed the decision to the European Court of Human Rights, while the US Department of State's 2006 Country Report described the incident as a serious example of a violation of press freedom.

Attacks on Independent Media: Challenges to the Freedom of Speech

Independent media in Moldova have faced not only economic and legal pressures but also more direct attacks on journalists themselves. This sort of pressure surfaced most recently in advance of the June 2007 local elections. Two months before the vote, the police detained two television crews filming an opposition protest march. A reporter from Pro TV was taken to the police station "for identification" even though he had already presented all necessary documents, and a cameraman for DTV was ordered to surrender his video-taped footage. The main NGO coalition monitoring the election campaign, the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections—Coalition 2007, subsequently condemned the incident as leaving "no room for doubts over regrettable accidents." On the contrary, it suggested that these actions were not random. "We are qualifying all these actions as... attempts to intimidate citizens who share different views from the official ones and as an attempt to curtail freedom of expression."

A few months earlier, two Romanian-language independent newspapers, *Jurnal de Chişinău* and *Ziarul de Garda*, had also come under direct pressure. In October 2006, a break-in at the *Jurnal de Chişinău* resulted in the loss of a computer used by a political reporter who had published investigative materials on public figures collaborating with security services. That same month, *Ziarul de Garda* reported pressure by officials and by other unidentified individuals to abandon certain investigations. The newspaper also reported attempts to corrupt its journalists and to intimidate sources. At around the same time, hackers entered the web site of the Centre for Journalistic Investigations—www.investigatii.md— and destroyed an archive of more than one hundred investigations.

The most serious attack on media freedoms came in June 2004 when an investigative reporter at the opposition *Timpul* newspaper, Alina Anghel, was attacked outside her home by

two assailants armed with a metal bar. Ms Anghel was hospitalized with a concussion and broken arm. According to local and international organizations, the attack was directly linked to her professional activity. Ms Anghel had written a series of investigative pieces on corruption among public servants. *Timpul* eventually lost a civil libel suit related to one of her investigations, and was forced into bankruptcy after being ordered to pay \$120,000 for "moral damages." The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, has noted that large civil defamation penalties are often misused by public officials and has recommended setting a "reasonable ceiling" (OSCE 2006).

European Integration: Avoiding the Media Issue

One of the priorities of the EU-Moldova Action Plan is to ensure respect for the freedom of the media and for the freedom of expression. In its Action Plan, the Moldovan authorities agreed to, "...ensure a transparent relationship between the authorities and media institutions in line with Council of Europe recommendations; making state financial assistance for media abide by strict and objective criteria equally applicable to all media; put in place and implement an appropriate legal framework guaranteeing the freedom of expression and of the media in line with European standards and on the basis of the recommendations of the Council of Europe."

However, insufficient media freedom and independence have been cited as key shortcomings in the implementation of the Action Plan, both by the European Commission and by the Moldovan organisations that monitor the government's performance. The issue has also frequently been raised by the diplomatic community in Chişinău. On one occasion in May 2005, for instance, Western diplomats published a joint statement calling on the country's leadership to develop a more vibrant and free media: "We attach great importance to freedom of expression and plurality of the media. A free, plural and independent media is essential to underpin the democratic process. We call on Moldova to adhere fully to its obligations to the OSCE, EU and Council of Europe as well as other international commitments." One year later, they again urged the government to "move from words to deeds" and respect "the spirit of common European values" when implementing broadcasting reforms. They also signalled a lack of progress in the field of media reform as well as obstacles to an independent press.

The political and economic pressures faced by Moldovan media place the country outside of European norms. Despite professing to want to move closer to the EU and eventually join the club, Moldova's leaders still seem to want to be judged relative to other members of the Common-

wealth of Independent States rather than against the former communist countries now in the EU. This needs to change, and Moldova would do well to learn from the example set by neighbouring Romania, an EU member with which it shares a common history, culture and language. The Romanian path could serve as a model for media development and could provide valuable lessons concerning the need for critical media scrutiny, the importance of enshrining rights to access and disseminate information and the right of journalists to practice their profession freely and safely. Regrettably, the PCRM which will remain in power until at

least the spring of 2009 continues to fall short in embracing these democratic principles.

Note:

This article was written in September 2007 for the publication "Media in the Enlarged Europe", University of Bedfordshire, Great Britain.

It is beyond the scope of this article to examine the media situation in Transnistria, a breakaway region in the Eastern part of the Republic of Moldova.

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TV news reports: to whom and how they are presented

Introduction

The small country of Moldova has a small media market. Since 1989 when the country became independent, the TV market has evolved at a slow pace. At the very beginning alongside TV Moldova there were Romanian and Russian state stations available throughout the country (they still are). Nowadays there are eight TV stations broadcasting from Chişinău: Moldova 1 (state owned), Pervii Canal Moldova (commercial), N4 (commercial), Pro TV Chişinău (commercial), TV7 (commercial), Euro TV Chişinău (commercial, former municipal public), Muz TV Moldova (commercial) and NIT (commercial). Six of them (Moldova 1, N4, Pro TV Chişinău, TV7, Euro TV Chişinău and NIT) broadcast local news.

Moldovan TV stations enjoy public trust in media in general and in television in particular. According to a recent survey¹ 66% of the population trusts mass media and 73% say television is their main source of information.

There are also challenges. Another study² showed that 97% of the population receives a TV signal, and that an external antenna is the most important means of doing so (46%). Cable is available to 1/3 of the population, while the rest use indoor antennas or satellite antennas. Cable is widespread in urban areas (more than 50% of urbanites have access to cable TV), but only about 14% of those living in villages can access cable. This led the Broadcasting Coordinating Council³ to conclude that, "The broadcasting sector in Moldova is developing to the detriment of a well-informed public. (...) The unequal distribution of frequencies has caused an obvious discrepancy in the quality of information available to citizens in rural areas and those in urban areas".

1. TV stations monitored

Two media outlets were monitored – the public broadcaster Moldova 1 and the commercial station TV 7. By monitoring and analyzing television programs, we wanted

to see the content and how it is presented in TV news programs, i.e., what they focus on, whether they cover the same events, how much time they dedicate to them and who appears in their reports. Monitoring was carried out between April 1 and April 30 2007.

Moldova 1 (www.trm.md) is the national public TV station and was founded in 1958. It is part of the state-owned Teleradio-Moldova Company and covers the whole country with its signal. The channel is financed from public money with funds allocated each year by Parliament. Moldova 1 broadcasts five news bulletins a day, with its main newscast at 21:00 (in Romanian). On weekends there are six news bulletins; the main one also at 21:00 in Romanian. It does not cover sports, and weather is broadcast separately.

TV7 (www.tv7.md) is a commercial TV station launched in 2006 covering Chişinău with its terrestrial signal and major cities on cable. It earns money from advertising. The channel belongs to the private Analitic Media Group. TV7 first rebroadcast the Russian channel NTV in Moldova but started its own local newscast in March 2006. It has three news bulletins a day with its main bulletin at 20:30 (in Russian). Two bulletins are repeated the next morning. Sports are included in the main newscast, but weather is broadcast separately. There are no news programs on weekends.

Both stations start their newscasts with short headlines 40 to 60 seconds long, and both programs have female anchors.

2. Analysis

2.1 Technical Aspects

The most obvious difference between the public and private stations monitored is that of picture quality. Clear, very well framed and shot images are the rule at TV 7, while dark pictures, unclear images and a lack of focus can be often seen on Moldova 1. For example, in the story on a strategy approved by the Broadcasting Coordinating Council on 02.04.2007, the interview with the institution's chairman was out of focus; an item on seeding in Soroca county on 02.04.2007 had a picture of very low quality; a report on the new president of Teleradio-Moldova Company taking over his duties on 11.04.2007 showed interviews shot with strong backlight and the story about a policeman kidnapped in

1. Barometru Opiniei Publice, May 2007, available at www.ipp.md

2. "Usage of communication and information technologies by population of Republic of Moldova - 2006" by United Nations Development Program, quoted in a Strategy elaborated by the Broadcasting Coordinating Council, www.cca.md.

3. Strategy by Broadcasting Coordinating Council, www.cca.md

Corjova Village by a Transnistrian⁴ militia on 12.04.2007 had badly framed interviews. Theoretically, both channels should have pictures of comparable quality as both use technical equipment of a comparable quality and age.

2.2 News and Presentation

During the monitoring period, Moldova 1 broadcast 139 news stories, more than a third with a voice over (short pieces read by the anchor and partially illustrated with no recorded interviews).

Voice overs are usually used when journalists cannot interview the protagonists in a news story, but that's not always the case at Moldova 1. On 02.04.2007, an opposition leader held a press conference, demanding that the President resign. The event was covered by TV7 as well as by Moldova 1, but the private station broadcast a full-length report (1 minute and 52 seconds), while Moldova 1 had a short 37-second voice over that did not even mention that the politician had demanded the President's resignation. Their coverage began, "Dumitru Braghis, leader of the Social Democracy Party, made public an open letter to President Vladimir Voronin. In the message, the economic situation of Moldova was described as catastrophic..." and went on with comments by Dumitru Braghis on Moldova's investment and social climate and ended with this statement: "Dumitru Braghis also said that the problems can be solved, and Moldova still has chances to be among the developed European countries." This represents a serious violation of journalistic ethics if not an attempt to manipulate the audience. Essential facts were omitted which in the end distorted the message. The form in which the event was covered made it appear less important and less interesting than other reports that had recorded interviews and were of a normal length.

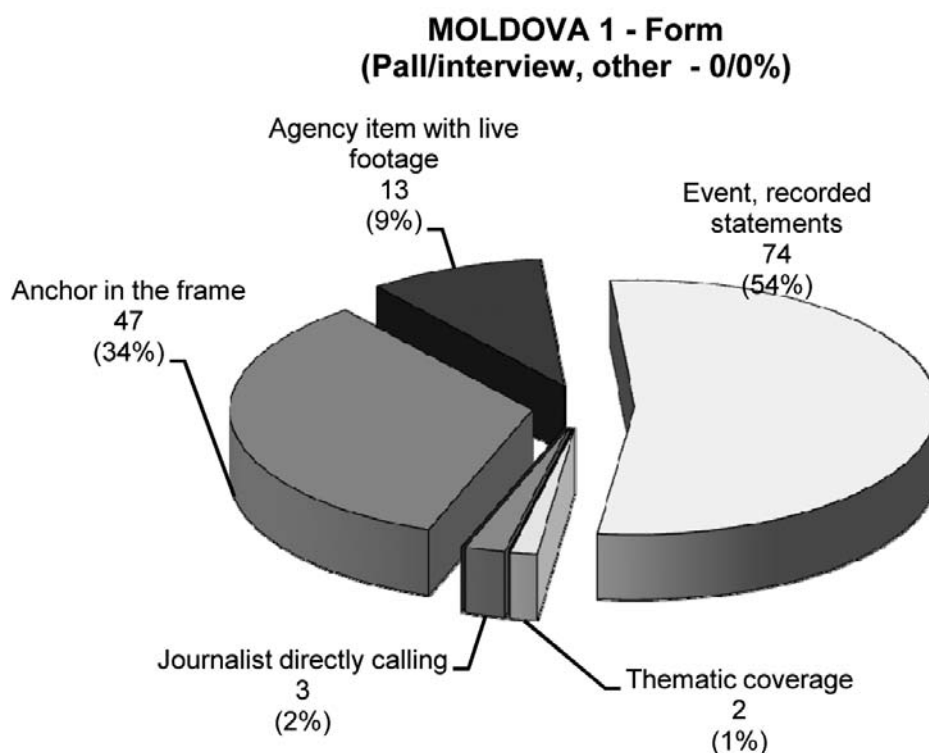
Most of the news, 54% on Moldova 1 and 53% on TV7, was reported items with recorded interviews on current events. While private station TV7 concentrated on press conferences

and public meetings, public station Moldova 1 focused on the activities of the President, the Prime Minister or the Speaker of Parliament as 23 stories out of 73 items with recorded interviews directly covered meetings, speeches or public events with the participation of at least one of these three top officials.

Example:

- 02.04.2007 President introducing the new chairman of the Supreme Court (first news story)
- 02.04.2007 Prime Minister visiting a pig farm
- 03.04.2007 Prime Minister chairing a meeting on organizing an economic forum
- 11.04.2007 President meeting an American official from the Millennium Challenge Fund (first news, voice over)
- 12.04.2007 President opening a tractor depot in a village in Transnistria
- 12.04.2007 Prime Minister visiting a farm in the south of Moldova
- 12.04.2007 Speaker of Parliament visiting the capital of Gagauzia⁵)

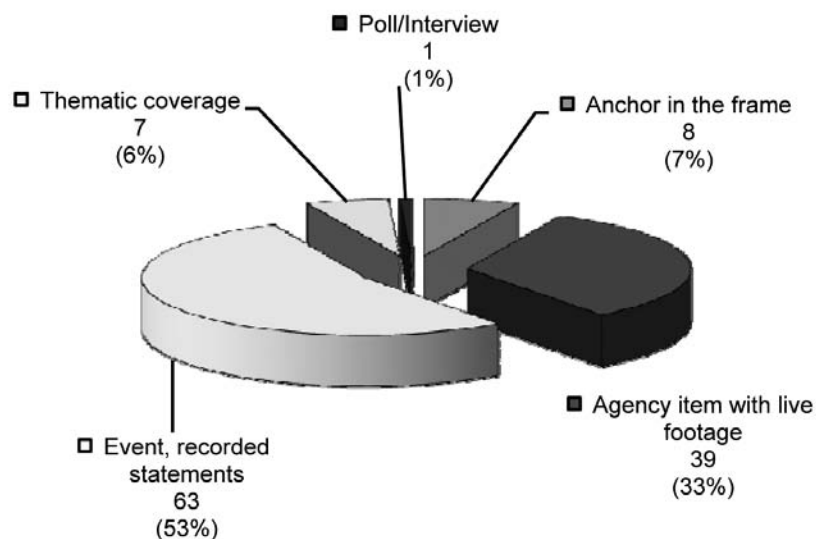
Neither Moldova 1, nor TV7 had live reports; however, the public station in three cases used telephone reports, two of



4. Transnistria is a small part of the Republic of Moldova on the left bank of the Nistru River not controlled by official authorities. In 1990, local leaders proclaimed the region's independence, but no country recognized it. In 1992 there was an armed conflict which last for several months. Since then, the parties have been negotiating a solution for the conflict.

5. Gagauzia (Gagauz-Yeri) is an autonomous administrative territory within the Republic of Moldova

FORM OF NEWS ITEMS (TV 7)



which (02.04.2007 and 20.04.2007) were about a political crisis in a neighboring country.

Also, there were events covered by TV7 that Moldova 1 completely ignored. On 11.04.2007, 24.04.2007 and 25.04.2007, the commercial station reported on a trial that involved the President. A member of Parliament took the President to court, accusing him of libel and calumny. On 11.04.2007 the court set the date for the trial, then on 24.04 and 25.04 there were two hearings (covered also by other TV stations). In the end, the judge dismissed the complaint, but the trial put the President in a bad light though Moldova 1 viewers could not follow the case as the station broadcast nothing about it.

Long interviews are a serious shortcoming on Moldova 1. Officials are allowed to talk for more than a minute on complicated and often strictly technical issues. For instance, on 11.04.2007, Moldova 1 reported on the resumption of exports of fruits and vegetables to Russia. The whole story, 1 minute and 43 seconds, consisted of an interview with the deputy minister of agriculture who explained the procedure exporters would have to follow. This story had a limited target group—exporters—who could not take notes about what the deputy minister was saying about the customs procedures.

2.3 Sources of Information and Balance

Government officials, NGOs, political parties, public institutions and independent experts serve as sources of information for both commercial and public TV stations. Each of them uses sources differently and concentrates on different subjects. As

previously discussed, Moldova 1 gets information mostly from top government officials, and in most of their economic news stories, the government is the main source of information (13 out of 25 stories compared with 6 out of 23 on TV7).

TV 7 sometimes broadcasts stories about ordinary people and their day-to-day problems like the story broadcast on 03.04.2007 about a woman's conflict with a construction company that wanted to buy and demolish her house. Moldova 1, on the other hand, does not broadcast stories about ordinary people. The commercial station also broadcast a vox pop on local elections and the candidates for Mayor of Chişinău while Moldova 1 did not. Also, the public station did not have any independent experts commenting on official documents or decisions. NGOs and opposition political parties had very little coverage in the national station's newscast.

On 20.04.2007, the President presented his economic initiatives to Parliament. Both TV7 and Moldova 1 covered the event with 8 and 9 interviews respectively. The distribution of pro and con interviews varied a great deal:⁶

TV7

- 1) For the initiatives (V. Voronin)
- 2) For (I. Dodon)
- 3) Against (I. Gutu)
- 4) Against (V. Cosarciuc)
- 5) Against (A. Taranu)
- 6) Against (Iu. Bolboceanu)
- 7) For (E. Ostapciuc)
- 8) For (Iu. Rosca)

Moldova 1

- 1) For (V. Voronin)
- 2) For (I. Dodon)
- 3) Against (I. Gutu)
- 4) For (E. Ostapciuc)
- 5) For (Iu. Rosca)
- 6) Neutral (D. Diacov)
- 7) For (I. Dodon)
- 8) For (N. Bondarciuc)

(the TV7 report showed a shot of a rude gesture from the President who lightly pushed the Prime Minister)

-
6. **Vladimir Voronin**, President of Republic of Moldova, leader of the Communists' Party
Igor Dodon, Minister of Economy and Commerce
Ion Gutu, member of the opposition party "Alianta Moldova Noastra"
Valeriu Cosarciuc, member of the opposition party "Alianta Moldova Noastra"
Anatol Taranu, unaffiliated deputy, member of the opposition National Liberal Party
Iurie Bolboceanu, unaffiliated deputy, member of the opposition Social Democracy party
Eugenia Ostapciuc, leader of the Communists' party fraction in Parliament
Iurie Rosca, deputy chairman of Parliament, leader of Christian-Democratic Peoples Party
Dumitru Diacov, leader of the Democratic Party
Nicolae Bondarciuc, communist deputy

Thus, TV 7 aired four interviews that supported the President's initiatives and four against them while Moldova 1 aired seven favorable opinions, one neutral view and only one against the proposals.

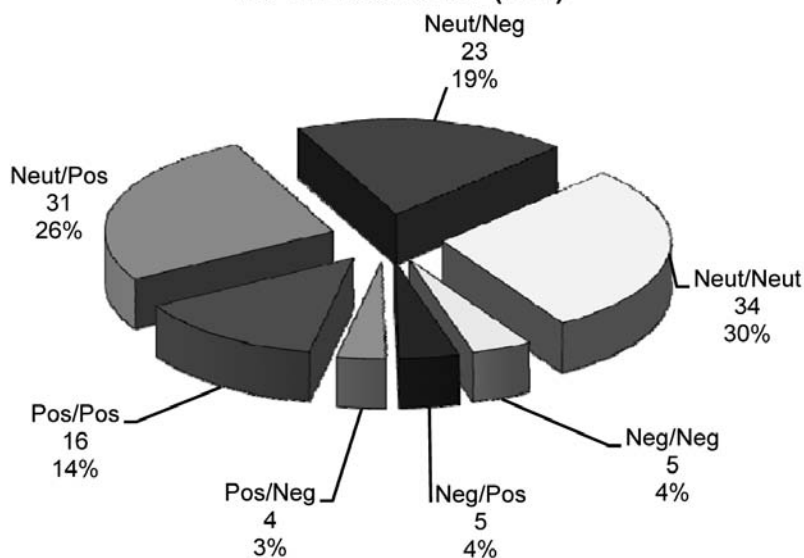
In addition, the commercial station allocated each person approximately the same amount of time while on Moldova 1, the negative and neutral voices both had less time than any of the pro voices.

There are also serious problems with balancing stories on crime. Moldova 1 broadcast seven items and TV7 aired six. All the stories were taken from police files, and even most of the pictures in them had been shot by policemen. None of the reports had a second source, and neither the suspects nor their lawyers were quoted or interviewed by the journalists. Moldova 1 and TV 7 covered a story in practically the same manner on 02.04.2007 on a lawyer who tried to hire a professional killer to murder a former partner, and who was caught by the police.

2.4 Story Length

The total amount of broadcast time was different at the two stations: Moldova 1 broadcast news for 3 hours and 20 minutes and TV7 did so for 2 hours and 31 minutes. The

EVALUATION OF CONTENT - ORIENTATION TO THE SUBJECT (TV7)

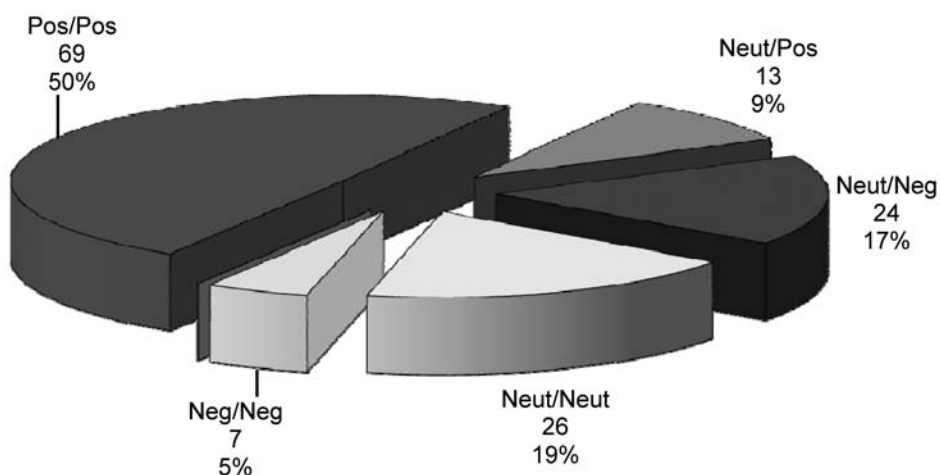


Key-Pos = positive; Neg = negative; Neut = neutral

length of news bulletins varied on Moldova 1 from 23 to 31 minutes and on TV7 from 16 to 22 minutes. News bulletins on various topics had almost the same amount of time and frequency. On Moldova 1, stories on politics, for example, represented 15% of the total number of stories and 14% of the total amount of time. The difference was greater for items on economic issues at 18% of the total number and 21% of total amount of time. This is partially explained by the length of individual stories.

EVALUATION OF CONTENT - ORIENTATION TO THE SUBJECT (MOLDOVA 1)

(Neg/Pos, Pos/Neg - 0/0%)



Key-Pos = positive; Neg = negative; Neut = neutral

Statistics on the length of bulletins on Moldova 1 showed that the public broadcaster often filled its newscast with stories that lasted for more than 2 minutes and that there were sometimes 5 to 6 minutes long. For example, the report on the President opening a tractor depot in a village on 12.04.2007 was exactly 6 minutes long, the news on the President presenting his economic initiatives in Parliament on 20.04.2007 lasted for 6 minutes and 26 seconds, and a story about the Speaker of Parliament meeting students on 23.04.2007 was almost 4 minutes long. The commercial

station also had longer stories, but 6 minutes, which in fact represents a quarter of a regular news program, was the record.

2.5 Criticism and Attitude

In April 2007, the Moldovan media mostly reported on three economic initiatives regarding the investment climate launched by the President. During the monitoring period, Moldova 1 had 4 news stories on this issue for a total of 15% of all economic items. In two cases there were reports on reactions to the President's proposals. A story broadcast on 11.04.2007 was introduced by the anchor with the words, "There have already been positive reactions from the business community" The report that followed had two interviews, one with the chairman of Chamber of Commerce who is a public official, and another one with a man introduced as a businessman. The pictures used for that story suggested that the "businessman" was a representative of a Russian-owned factory in Chişinău. Both interviewees supported the President's initiatives. A similar report on 12.04.2007 was introduced by the anchor with the words, "New opinions concerning the President's initiative appear..." The story had two favorable interviews on the initiatives - one with a public official from Gagauzia, and another one with a man introduced as a businessman from Ceadir-Lunga (Gagauzia). The President's initiatives were also featured on 12.04.2007 in a short story on an upcoming visit of an International Monetary Fund mission and in a long report about parliamentary discussions on them (see 2.3). None of these items contained any critical comments (except a short sound bite in the news story broadcast on 20.04.2007) on the economic proposals made by the head of the state.

The commercial station broadcast two stories on the President's initiatives. One was on 12.04.2007 when a presidential advisor explained them which was an unbalanced story with only one interview from the official, but it was treated neutrally. The second one was on 20.04.2007 and was more or less a balanced story on discussions in Parliament (see 2.3).

On 02.04.2007, the Mayor of Chişinău announced that starting the next day, the city's streets would be washed every morning. Both TV7 and Moldova 1 reported that statement, but only the commercial station followed up the story next day with an item showing that the Mayor had failed to keep his promise.

Both TV stations had stories in which the attitudes of the journalists or stations were obvious. Half of the stories broadcast by Moldova 1 could be interpreted as positive coverage of positive events. Among them were stories on

budget revenues (03.04.2007), the Prime Minister's visit to a farm in the south of Moldova (12.04.2007) and an item on a presentation of Moldovan wines in Sweden (20.04.2007). A total of 41% of the stories were neutral although the content varied and in most cases was news about world affairs. A negative attitude in a negative context were the 5% of stories on crimes.

2.6 Geographic Distribution of News and Topics

Public broadcasters are by definition supposed, to cover as much of the country as possible and as wide a range of issues as possible. Although Moldova 1's signal covers the whole the country and TV7's covers only the capital, the geographical distribution of their stories was virtually the same at 88% on Moldova, 4% on Transnistria and 1% on Gagauzia for TV7 and 76% on Moldova 1% on Transnistria and 1% on Gagauzia on Moldova 1 (i.e., three news stories—one on Gagauzia and two on Transnistria). In two cases, regional stories covered official visits like the one on 12.04.07 by the President to open a tractor depot on the left bank of Nistru River and the story on 12.04.07 about the meeting of the Speaker of Parliament with local deputies in Comrat, the capital of Gagauzia. Only one story, also on 12.04.07, was about a Moldovan policeman kidnapped by the Transnistrian militia and not about government officials.

In addition to news from the two major regions, Moldova 1 broadcast items concerning international affairs and, implicitly, other countries (31 items or 22% of the total). The absolute majority of news stories - 97 out of 105 - was related to Chişinău, the capital, while the remaining eight items concerned events from other towns. TV7 had 3 stories out of 104 on events in cities other than Chişinău, but again, their signal reaches only Chişinău while Moldova 1's is national

Commercial TV stations look for sensational news stories to raise audience interest and thereby increase ratings and revenues from advertising. In this respect, the public broadcaster has less to worry about as its budget is approved at the beginning of the year. Yet, the distribution of topics at the two stations was quite similar: politics, the economy and social news predominated at both. Culture was covered less frequently while education, science, religion and ecology almost had no coverage on either the public or the commercial TV station.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Professional

- The quality of pictures and video editing on the public station has to be drastically improved.

- Moldova 1 could make use of a wider range of forms of news stories, including but not limited to live reports and vox pops.
- A diversification of sources of information and including ordinary people among them is of crucial importance for Moldova 1.
- Many stories broadcast by Moldova 1 lack balance, an issue that may raise concerns regarding the station's credibility.
- The obvious case of inaccurate information (the opposition leader's letter to the President on 02.04.2007, see 2.2) leaves room for uncertainty and may indicate that there could be other similar cases. Because of that, the accuracy of information presented should be strictly monitored.

3.2 Socially

- Moldova 1 should move the focus from public officials to ordinary people. Events have to be approached from the point of view of those watching the newscast; stories ought to start with the effects that events, phenomena or decisions might have on people's lives.
- The public station has to report more on events happening outside the capital including those in Gagauzia and Transnistria.
- Critique is an essential part of making and implementing decisions. The opposition, independent experts and NGOs have a lot to say and should have a place in the public station's newscasts.
- Foreign news should get less coverage (now 22% of the total number of items and 12% of the total time).

**IJC Research
and Publications Department**

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Public Relations in Public Administration and On-Line Communication

Introduction

The twenty-first century can also be called the century of communication. We cannot imagine today a society without mobile telephony, without television, without Internet, without everything bearing the generic name of communication. Here is just one of the definitions given in the literature: "The process of communication represents a fundamental feature of the human being and expresses the universal, unlike the means of communication, which refer to the techniques and technologies which facilitate and intensify the process of communication among individuals and communities, giving them, in some cases, a mass character."¹ I did not choose this definition by accident; the process of communication and the means of communication are the key elements in public relations (PR) maintained in public administration (PA) institutions at all levels. The following methods are used in this article: comparative research on PR management by the President's Office and the Parliament of Moldova on their websites (with regard to PR, relations with the media, and contacts) and similar websites in other countries and an analysis of the contents of those websites for efficient PR and to formulate recommendations for efficiently managing PR in PA.

Public Relations Management in Public Administration

What is the role of PR management in Moldova in general and in PA in particular? In an expert opinion,² the most important features of PR are the following:

- deliberation** - providing information, exerting influence and obtaining a response from the public;
- planning** - the resources of any organization are limited and therefore they must be planned in relation to the importance of the activities conducted;
- performance** - the performance of the PR team and its results determine the organization's performance in relation to the client;
- bilateral communication**—taking the information from the environment where the organization operates, conveying new information and following feedback;

public interest - the main goal of PR is to satisfy the public's needs;

managerial dimension - the efficiency of PR activities depends on the quality of management, i.e., PR in any organization and especially in PA is focused on the public interest.

In Paul Marinescu's opinion, "Public relations represent the management of communication based on public interest." Observing the development of PR in PA in recent years, we dare to make the assumption that PR in Moldova is appreciated neither at the level of high administration (leadership of Parliament, government, President's Office) nor at the level of the society as a whole. We will further try to identify the weakest link in the weak chain of local PR.

PR management can be conducted by a modern administration in accordance with the rigors of the field. Let us first see how the experts define the structure of a classical PR department.³

According to them, one of the suitable formulas for PR in PA would be to position the PR department in contact with all other subdivisions thus vertically centralizing the flow of information. This type of organization offers the advantage that the specialists of the PR department have all the information and can present solutions to management for solving image crises and communication problems.

Public Relations in Public Administration: The Weak Link

The efficiency of public relations is estimated by ratings, surveys, and opinions polls. Judging by the results of the surveys conducted by the Institute of Political Policies in recent years, the population does not trust public administration authorities very much. Thus, the question, "What is the source of information that you trust most of all," was answered by only 3% with "local public authorities" and then only as a second source.⁴ In fact, the "total trust in local public authorities" was 7% in November 2006.⁵ In other words, we should be witnessing a free fall in their image that drastically affects administration at all levels, but this

1. Monica Voicu, Costache Rusu, "ABCul comunicării manageriale" (ABC of Management Communication), Danubius Publishing House, 1998, p.11

2. "Relațiile Publice. Principii și strategii", (Public relations. Principles and Strategies) Polirom, 2001

3. V. Stancu, M. Stoica, A. Stoica - Relații publice - Succes și credibilitate, (Public Relations - Success and Credibility), Concept Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 142

4. B12 <http://www.ipp.md/barometru1.php?l=ro&id=30>

5. <http://www.ipp.md/print.php?l=ro&id=29&pl=ba>

is not so in our country. When watching TV, one has the impression that things are going better and better. The lack of political, economic and communication clear-sightedness in such a delicate field as PR in PA many times leads to serious image crises which, at a certain point, can no longer be managed and solved efficiently. The Russian expert A. Olshevski says in his work "Anti-Crisis Public Relations and Consulting"⁶ that ignoring the importance of efficient PR and perpetuating lengthy image crises may lead to very serious consequences for the organization. Based on the table below, we can conclude that in Moldova, PA at all levels including political parties and state institutions is going through an unprecedented image crisis that is treated with silence by PA representatives and PR specialists:

D1. How much do you trust...? (one answer per line)	A lot of trust	Some trust	Not much trust	Lack of trust	I don't know	No answer
1. Government	5.7%	30.4%	32.9%	24.9%	4.1%	1.9%
2. Parliament	5.6%	26.5%	35.9%	25.2%	4.8%	2.1%
3. Country's President	11.4%	35.8%	22.3%	24.5%	4.0%	1.9%
4. Justice	3.5%	28.2%	34.5%	21.4%	10.2%	2.2%
5. Army	9.8%	35.9%	27.7%	14.1%	10.7%	1.9%
6. Church	39.5%	38.5%	10.5%	5.7%	3.6%	2.1%
7. Mayor's Office	8.4%	38.9%	30.6%	16.0%	4.4%	1.6%
8. Political Parties	1.8%	17.6%	38.7%	27.4%	12.6%	2.0%
9. Banks	6.7%	32.0%	28.1%	19.3%	12.1%	1.8%
10. Police	4.0%	24.2%	32.6%	31.5%	6.0%	1.6%
11. Mass media (print and broadcast)	9.0%	56.7%	17.1%	8.8%	6.6%	1.8%
12. Non-governmental (public) organizations	4.2%	34.5%	22.6%	12.0%	24.4%	2.4%
13. Trade Unions	3.6%	27.2%	25.6%	13.9%	26.9%	2.8%

Source: <http://www.ipp.md/barometru1.php?l=ro&id=30>, 2007

From the viewpoint of PR specialists, one of the most important PR concepts relates to image. The concept of wish image is used in PR planning. The wish image is the one the client wishes to promote inside and outside. Identification of the desired image underlies the formulation of PR objectives as the success of all PR activities depends to a large extent on their quality. Communication management is based on PR planning that takes place in several stages: identifying the problem; setting general goals; formulating strategies; planning and developing the PR mixture and programming and assessing. All these stages are equally important and require a responsible and qualified approach.

Unfortunately, we will not find, judging by the results, a professional attitude towards such an important area as PR on any Moldovan PA websites. There are several means by which PA can beneficially use PR: press releases, interviews,

press conferences, organized events and use of mass media, radio and TV. However, these forms of PR are unilateral activities directed from the organization to the public. As we saw above, PR efficiency is measured by means of feedback, that is, through the bilateral relation between PA and the public, i.e. the citizen. If we do not have any objections to the "unilateral" activities (websites as well as broadcast and print media provide enough information about the activities that PA representatives want to make public and known to public opinion), then we can find serious gaps in what concerns feedback at almost all levels of PR in PA in Moldova.

The weaknesses of PR in PA are as follows: lack of trained PA officials, lack of a system of continuous training in PR

and poor professional training and skills acquired from a totalitarian system in which the PA officer does not report to the citizens about his/her activities.

Public Relations Management by Public Authorities in Moldova

In order to see how PR is handled at the national level, we will make a comparative analysis of websites from Moldova, Romania and Russia. For those interested, there is enough literature on this topic published by international projects. We will use the example of the non-government organization Acces-Info⁷ that has been publishing extremely useful literature over the years such as *Free Access to Information. Handbook for Public Officers*. In the short annotation to the 2006 edition, the authors write the following:

6. http://polbu.ru/olshevsky_consulting/ch58_i.html

7. <http://www.acces-info.org.md/index.php?cid=165>

The adoption of a law, including a law on access to information, is only a first step. Its enforcement, including the transformation of the administrative culture into a more democratic and more responsible one, becomes very problematic especially in vulnerable economies where the state budget for the enforcement of a general program of complementary measures is limited. This handbook intended for public authorities is conceived as a source of inspiration for officers wishing or having to improve their administrative activity to the highest standards of freedom of information; the handbook is intended to help them professionalize their activities thus attracting the public's trust and appreciation.

It is obvious that our public officers do not read such literature which results our lagging behind with regard to access to information and effective PR.

We will further analyze the websites of some PA institutions from the aspect of their communication with the public at large focusing on the following criteria: the site's transparency to the public, the presence of specific contacts (names, telephone numbers, forums, e-mail addresses), the system for evaluating communication (statistics, feedback, indicators) and regular updating.

President's Office

Website of the Moldovan President, Vladimir Voronin
<http://www.presedinte.md/>

The official website of the Moldovan President⁸ does not in the "Press Service" section provide a model of efficient communication (see <http://www.presedinte.md/press.php?lang=rom>). You will not find the names of contact persons, any telephone numbers, mail or e-mail addresses on this site not to mention a forum through which ordinary citizens can communicate with the President's Office. There is no distinction between relations with the media and public relations. On this website one can find a Department of Law and Public Relations with the telephone and fax of the Head of the Department, the President's Counselor on Legal Matters, Artur Reșetnicov (tel.: 50-42-44; fax: 24-55-26) and the Deputy Head of the Department, Edgar Bejan (tel.: 50-42-44). Then we find in a separate place the press service composed of the Head of the Service who is also the President's Spokesperson Natalia Vișanu (tel.: 50-42-30.) These persons cannot be contacted by e-mail, and it is extremely difficult to reach them on the phone. Taking into account the citizens' trust in PA, I doubt that an ordinary person would frequently call those numbers to get information about any issues.

8. <http://www.presedinte.md/>

Site-ul președintelui României, Traian Băsescu
<http://www.presidency.ro>

We find an entirely different situation on the website of the Romanian President, Traian Băsescu.⁹ It contains the page "Department of Public Communication," the section "Contacts," addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. The section "Interactive"¹⁰ allows for efficient bilateral contact and offers to each citizen the possibility to ask questions of the President or to request information. As you will see below, this is not about a formal approach to communication with citizens. We read in *România Liberă*¹¹ on 18 May 2007, "President Traian Băsescu was included in the record book as the president who gave the fastest answer to a question asked by a citizen as published in the World Records Academy website. According to this source, President Băsescu answered a question in less than two hours on 18 April..." In this regard, Traian Băsescu can serve as an example of an efficient manager of PR in PA.

Website of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin
www.kremlin.ru

The website of President Putin¹³ is also much richer than that of President Voronin and includes the sections necessary for bilateral communication with citizens such as the section "Letters" that describes how to send a letter by regular or electronic mail and contains statistics about letters addressed to President Putin, their subjects and geographic origins. The site has several divisions including the Service for Press and Information, Review of Petitions and Internal and External Communication. This site, too, contains all necessary contact information and e-mail addresses and can be easily used by anyone.

Parliament

Official Website of Moldovan Parliament
www.parlament.md

In comparison with Parliament's website,¹⁴ that of the Moldovan President seems to be extremely rich. The

9. http://www.presidency.ro/?_RID=dep&id=3&_PRID=dep_pers

10. http://www.presidency.ro/?_RID=dep&id=3&_PRID=dep_pers

11. <http://www.romanialibera.ro/a95547/traian-basescu-in-cartea-recordurilor.html>

12. This analysis does not aim to cover the entire spectrum of use of public relations, nor to establish that Romanian and Russian presidents have solved all communication problems with Internet users. The comparison from this work only points out the problems that Moldova has regarding PR in PA and offers possible solutions.

13. <http://kremlin.ru/articles/administration09.shtml>

14. www.parlament.md

website of Parliament, the legislative body democratically elected by the Moldovan citizens, is an example of an electronic anachronism. It does not provide any telephone numbers of Members of Parliament (MPs), parliamentary factions, or even of the Press and Image Service (see <http://www.parlament.md/apparatus/services>). This democratic, representative body studiously hides from the electorate. No communication, no feedback. I tried a few times to find the telephone numbers of some MPs, but neither the 1189 service provides this information, although they have Parliament's address, nor will the Head of the Security Service of Parliament (23-72-20) give any telephone numbers although he has a list of all MPs and parliamentary commissions and their numbers right in front of him. I can get information only when I use my title of ex-MP or of university professor, but what can ordinary citizens do, those who cannot resort to friends or relatives and who do not have informal relations with Parliament? PR management on Parliament's site does not correspond to the standards of a democratic state. This is also a reason why Parliament is not popular with the population (see the table with the opinions from the IPP Barometer).

Website of Romanian Parliament (www.parlament.ro)

Unlike the President's website, the Romanian Parliament is not so open to relations with the public. For example, the Senate's page does not provide any phone numbers, and the section "Useful Telephone Numbers"¹⁵ provides all official telephone numbers (ministries, President, Chamber of Deputies) except for...the Senate's. The sections "Public Relations" and "Relations with the Media" are not even active. The Chamber of Deputies provides in the footnote on its first page several phone numbers without specifying whose they are, and we also find in the section "Services of Chamber of Deputies" two telephone numbers and several e-mail addresses, also anonymous. (<http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=18>).

Only when accessing the page "Romania in the European Union" (<http://www.parlament.ro/aderare/>) can one find positive changes (http://www.cdep.ro/relatii_publice/site2.pagina?den=presa-contact1): a forum, contacts, names and telephone numbers. It is obvious that Romania's adherence to EU rules has had a beneficial effect on the development of its PR in PA.

Website of the Russian Parliament (<http://www.duma.gov.ru>)

The website of the State Duma does not compare even to that of the President, however, it provides a page with contacts and the structure of Parliament which has a division for relations with the public and the media.

E-mail address of State Duma:
stateduma@duma.gov.ru

Information about State Duma telephone numbers:
692-80-00

07 Mokhovaya street, Moscow 03265
Information about written inquiries: (495)202-47-89
Information about public intake: (495)202-66-70
Intake hours: from 9 AM to 5 PM

Fax for written inquiries: (495)203-42-58

One can no longer find a forum here, e-mail addresses or contacts with officials. During our research, we found that the websites of the presidents of these three countries are better organized from a PR perspective than those of their parliaments (except for Romania in the "European Integration" department).

Public Relations in Public Administration

The Government of Moldova¹⁶ is made up of 21 persons (<http://gov.md/index.php?lng=ro&a=cb>). We will not be able to analyze the PR activity for each minister since such research exceeds the scope of this article, so we will refer to only two government sites: that of the government and the Prime Minister (www.gov.md) and that of the Ministry of Local Public Administration (<http://www.mapl.gov.md/>). We must say from the outset that the website of the Ministry of Local Public Administration (at the time of research the Minister was Vitalie Vrabie) offers citizens much broader information and establishes a much more efficient PR system than the Prime Minister's site. The latter does not contain very many contact phone numbers, the letters go in one direction (from the citizen to the anonymous officer), and the relations with the public are reduced to one page lacking information (<http://gov.md/index.php?lng=ro&a=mail2005>). The contact page of the Ministry of Public Administration,¹⁷ on the other hand, has everything, including a help line and e-mail addresses.

15. <http://www.senat.ro/PaginaPrincipala.aspx?b=0&adr=/pagini/telefoane%20utile/w-repertoar-tel.htm>

16. www.gov.md

17. <http://www.mapl.gov.md/index.php?ID=5>

Ministry's address:

1 Piața Marii Adunări Naționale, Government Building, MD
2033, Republic of Moldova
Tel.: +373 22 200170, fax.: +373 22 238922

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Tel.</i>	<i>E-mail</i>
Vitalie Vrabie	Minister	+373 22 200170	Vitalie.Vrabie@mapl.gov.md
Guznac Valentin	Deputy Minister	+373 22 200170	Valentin.Guznac@mapl.gov.md
Lilia Melnic	Counselor	+373 22 200173	Lilia.Melnic@mapl.gov.md
Valachi Valentina	Secretary	+373 22 200170	info@mapl.gov.md

Department for LPA Relations

Căruță Radu	Chief of Department	+373 22 200176	Radu.Caruta@mapl.gov.md
Rusnac Vladimir	Deputy Chief	+373 22 200186	Vladimir.Rusnac@mapl.gov.md
Duca Adrian	Main Consultant	+373 22 200187	Adrian.Duca@mapl.gov.md
Căun Victor	Consultant	+373 22 200188	Victor.Caun@mapl.gov.md
Zaharia Grigore	Consultant	+373 22 200189	Grigorie.Zaharia@mapl.gov.md

Direcția Juridică și Control Administrativ

Sereda Radu	Chief of Department	+373 22 200177	Radu.Sereda@mapl.gov.md
Smali Alina	Deputy Chief	+373 22 200180	Alina.Smali@mapl.gov.md
Beglița Valentin	Main Consultant	+373 22 200181	Valentin.Beglița@mapl.gov.md
Cucoș Emil	Consultant	+373 22 200182	Emil.Cucos@mapl.gov.md
Cracan Vasile	Consultant	+373 22 200183	Vasile.Cracan@mapl.gov.md

Administrative-Financial and Human Resource Department

Tomșa Silva	Chief of Department	+373 22 200175	Silvia.Tomsa@mapl.gov.md
Lipcan Diana	Deputy Chief	+373 22 200185	Diana.Lipcan@mapl.gov.md
Petrov Anastasia	Senior Consultant	+373 22 200174	Anastasia.Petrov@mapl.gov.md

**Division of International Relations,
European Integration and Regional Development**

Candu Lucia	Chief of Division	+373 22 200178	Lucia.Candu@mapl.gov.md
Lutenco Ana	Consultant	+373 22 200179	Ana.Lutenco@mapl.gov.md

Help Line: 214111

**List of Institutions Subordinated
to the Ministry of Local Public Administration**

<i>Cod</i>	<i>Contact telephone</i>	<i>Chief</i>
■ Bălți Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
231	2-30-56	Mahu Octavian
■ Cahul Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
299	3-10-95	Micinschi Avram
■ Chișinău Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
022	23-33-04	Radu Chilaru (ad interim)
■ Edineț Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
246	2-25-50	Guțu Dorel
■ Florești Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
250	2-58-27	Concescu Nicolae
■ Hîncești Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
269	2-34-65	Bulat Nicolae
■ Orhei Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
235	3-24-45	Nasalcu Ion
■ Ungheni Territorial Department for Administrative Supervision		
236	2-23-60	Rață Gheorghe

This site also contains the addresses and telephone numbers of all district presidents but not their e-mail addresses. The Ministry's mission set forth by Minister V. Vrabie is also conclusive, "This page of the Ministry of Local Public Administration gives us the possibility to inform each other, to be in continuous contact in the implementation of our common goals of the program 'Country's Revival – People's Welfare' (<http://www.mapl.gov.md/>)." However, neither of the two websites has a forum, and the information is a bit old (the agenda of the Prime Minister refers to events from 23 May 2007, and the Ministry's page contains the agenda of 18 May 2007).¹⁸

Website of the Romanian Government¹⁹

The website of the Romanian government is richer and more varied than that of the Moldovan government; however, the lack of efficient PR in the Romanian government's policy can be felt as there is no visible feedback, the forum is not activated, the representative of the Public Relations Department is not mentioned in any form and there is only short, impersonal information for contacts as follows:

18. This paper was written during 20-29 May 2007.

19. www.gov.ro

Contact

Government of Romania

1 Piata Victoriei, sector 1, Bucharest
Telephone: +40-21-314 34 00, 319 15 64

When the section "Contact" is accessed, this same information appears.

If the Romanian Parliament's site lives up to European standards, then the government's site must still be revised in accordance with European Commission requirements,²⁰ "The decisions made by the Commission in various areas affect the lives of many European citizens. The Commission tends to be as open and responsible as possible with regard to such decisions, informing the citizens about any subject." Thus, 1.5 million documents on the EU can be accessed on its website, www.europa.eu.int. The site is continuously updated; it includes all Commission policies and contains various interactive subjects offering multiple ways of identifying requested information as follows.

- **Access to documents:** Transparency is one of the priorities of the European Commission. Thus, the public has access not only to official publications, but also to internal documents. Anyone can ask for a document related to his/her profession without giving reasons for the request. Access can be limited only to information containing a confidentiality clause or that would prejudice legal interests in business procedures.
- **Questions and answers:** The public can contact the Commission by letter, fax or e-mail in any one of the EU's official languages (author's note: these data are from 2004. Today, there are 23 languages in EU). The Commission must answer in the same language within 15 days from the receipt of the letter.

The easiest method for obtaining information from the Commission is by telephone or e-mail at the electronic address www.europa.eu.int/europedirect. This is a special service that posts specific answers about the Commission and also provides legal consulting.

Website of the Russian Government²¹

The website of the Russian Prime Minister does not make any reference to contacts for Russian government officers with the public nor do the sections that we expected would provide more information, i.e., the Press Center (<http://www.government.ru/government/presscenter>) and the Press Service. The Press Service site does not provide any telephone numbers or any e-mail addresses not to mention any forums. Ordinary citizens do not have access to information and cannot contact anyone from the Russian Government.

20. In the Service of People. Delegation of European Commission for Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, Kiev, 2004, p.16

21. <http://www.government.ru>

Press Service

Deputy Director of the Department for Mass Media, Culture and Education:

REVENKO Evgenii Vasilievich

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KAZAKOV Sergey Pavlovich

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<http://www.government.ru/government/presscenter/presscuttingservice/>

Conclusions

Efficient PR depends most of all on political will, on the level of democracy and on transparency promoted at the highest levels.

Based on the above, I have concluded the following:

- a) Moldova is very much behind with regard to the organization of public relations in public administration in general and regarding on-line PR in PA in particular. This lagging behind is also noticed when comparing Moldovan official sites with Romanian or Russian sites.
- b) The image of PA authorities among citizens is not a favorable one and is constantly deteriorating which is especially alarming in the current stage of reforms. The lack of an effective communication system, including via Internet, between PA and citizens is one of the obstacles in the way of efficient reforms in all areas of economic, social and political life.
- c) Efficient communication, transparency, free movement of information and PR in PA are all essential features of a democratic society that require radical reform in Moldova that should be supported by legislative amendments and by implementing modern mechanisms of PR with adequate funding from the state budget.
- d) Transparency, openness and correctness in relations with ordinary citizen must become a modus vivendi for public officials at all levels.
- e) Both citizens and public officials must have the opportunity to acquire knowledge in modern PR. For this purpose, the Free University of Moldova can provide substantial assistance both to citizens and to public authorities.
- f) Without modern and effective PR, Moldova's progress toward democracy, well-being and transparency and the fight against corruption will not yield the hoped for results.

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A Short Analysis of the Need to Amend Legislation on Mass Media

In recent years, Moldova has progressed in its attempts to align national media legislation with European and international standards.

In spite of this, Moldova has been criticized by international organizations for restricting press freedom, and Freedom House included Moldova in the “non-free press” category in the year 2006 stating that, “Despite the legal provisions protecting press freedom, the authorities often violate such rights.”¹ The same conclusion results from the eight decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) condemning Moldova for violations of the right to freedom of expression: *Flux and Samson vs. Moldova* (23 Oct 2007), *People and Poiată vs. Moldova* (16 Oct 2007), *Flux (No. 2) vs. Moldova* (3 July 2007), *Flux (No. 3) vs. Moldova* (12 June 2007), *Kommersant Moldovya vs. Moldova* (9 Jan 2007), *Savițchi vs. Moldova* (11 Oct 2005), *Busuioc vs. Moldova* (21 Dec 2004) and *Amihălăchioaie vs. Moldova* (20 April 2004).

The legal framework for mass media must be improved by the government's unconditional execution of obligations undertaken in international treaties and in other legal acts (e.g., Threshold Country Program of 12 September 2006; 2004–2008 National Action Plan on Human Rights of 24 October 2003). These actions must ensure guarantees for press freedom and independence, they must stimulate the publication of investigative stories, and they must contribute to strengthening the role of the press as a watchdog in a democratic society.

A. General Matters on a Legal Framework for Mass Media

The most important international and national acts that regulate the activity of the media are the following.

○ **international acts:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights (ratified on 28 July 1990//*International Treaties*, Vol. I, p.11), International Pact on Civil and Political Rights (ratified on 28 July 1990 //*International Treaties*, Vol. I, p.30), Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms/European Convention on Human Rights ECHR/ (ratified on 24 July 1997 // *International Treaties*, Vol. I, p.341), European Convention on Cross-border Television (ratified on 19 Dec 2002//*International Treaties*, Vol. XXXVIII, p.133).

b) **general legal acts:** *Constitution of the Republic of Moldova* (MO² No.1 of 12 Aug 1994), *Civil Code of the Republic of Moldova* (MO No.82-86 of 22 June 2002), *Code on Administrative Offences* (approved by Law of Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic of 29 March 1985), *Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova* (MO No.128-129 of 13 Sept 2002), *Criminal Procedural Code of the Republic of Moldova* (MO No.111-115 of 12 June 2003), *Criminal Procedural Code of the Republic of Moldova* (MO No.104-110 of 7 June 2003), *Electoral Code* (MO No.81 of 8 Dec 1997).

c) **specific legal acts on the dissemination of information:** *Broadcasting Code of the Republic of Moldova* (MO No.131-133 of 18 Aug 2006), *Law on Press* (MO No.2 of 12 Jan 1995), *Law on Access to Information* (MO No.88-90 of 28 July 2000), *Law on Publishing Activity* (MO No.70-72 of 22 June 2000), *Law on State Secrets* (MO No.2 of 25 Aug 1994), *Law on Trade Secrets* (MO No.13 of 10 Nov 1994), *Law on Computerization and State Informational Resources* (MO No.6-12 of 1 Jan 2004), *Law on Copyright and Related Rights* (MO No.13 of 2 March 1995), *Law on Counteracting Extremist Activity* (MO No.56-58 of 28 March 2003), *Law on Publicity* (MO No.67-68 of 16 Oct 1997), *Law on Protection of Personal Data* (MO No.107-111 of 27 July 2007).

This legal framework has flaws that affect the activity of the Moldovan media. We will point out some of the most problematic aspects of the legislation that more or less impede journalists' activities, mainly in the context of ensuring guarantees for investigative journalism.

Defamation

The risks related to the eventuality and consequences of a defamation lawsuit represent one of the biggest dangers for investigative journalism. Such lawsuits may have a civil legal character (Article 16, Civil Code), criminal character (Article 304, Criminal Code) or that of an administrative offence (Article 47/2 and 47/3, Code on Administrative Offences).

Civil Code

The provisions of Article 16 of the Civil Code are structured into nine paragraphs and their subject is, “the Protection of Honor, Dignity and Professional Reputation.” According to

1. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2006>

2. Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova.

these provisions, a person's honor, dignity and professional reputation are injured when false and damaging information is disseminated about that person. The person filing legal proceedings (the plaintiff, presumed victim) must prove the fact of dissemination of information, and the person that disseminated the information (the defendant, presumed culprit) must prove its truthfulness. The liability imposed may consist of a retraction of the information, the publication of the response and the payment of pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary damages.

The provisions of this article raise a number of problems mainly with regard to the compatibility of Article 16 with European standards (as they are promoted by the ECHR). The first problem resides from the need to differentiate between value judgments and facts. Article 16 establishes liability for disseminating damaging information that does not correspond to reality; however, the term "information" can have a double meaning.

Facts – Facts are information about an event, process or phenomenon that took place in the past or is taking place at present in specific conditions of place and time that can be either true or false. Such factual and existential information may correspond, or not, to reality. If it does not correspond to reality and injures a person's honor and dignity, its disseminator is subject to legal liability.

Value judgments – Value judgments are opinions, appraisals, convictions and ideologies, theories, concepts, assumptions, programs, plans and forecasts that by their essence cannot be either true or false. They may be valuable, valueless or negative; correct or incorrect; grounded or groundless, persuasive or disputable; progressive or reactionary. They cannot be denied by a court judgment. They may be debated by polemic, i.e. response, retort, comment.

The lack of regulation of the above-mentioned aspects has led not only to Moldova's conviction by ECHR in a number of cases but has also discouraged a critical attitude on the part of Moldovan journalists.

Jurisprudence also requires special treatment of various categories of plaintiffs or defendants. Public persons, mainly politicians, have been acknowledged as persons who have implicitly accepted an increased level of attention and criticism towards themselves in exchange for the possibility to play an important role in the life and control of society. Accordingly, they must display increased tolerance to exaggerated statements, and the court must confirm this in its judgments if the status of politician is a major impediment to winning a defamation lawsuit.

Jurisprudence further requires that good faith, reasonable investigation and observance of professional standards

be taken into account in deciding a defamation case. If a journalist or media outlet follows a legitimate purpose, if the matter is ascribed to the public interest and if reasonable efforts have been made to check the facts, a defense based on good faith replaces proof of truthfulness. In the spirit of the European Court, the plaintiff must have the possibility to defend himself/herself when publishing materials not only by proving their truthfulness but also by proving the good faith with which incorrect information was published that the plaintiff reasonably considered being correct. The guarantee to protect honor, dignity and professional reputation raises the problem of the equality of the parties in the case (especially the problem of equality of defense) and does not meet the exigencies of an informational society. The task of establishing good faith must be balanced between the parties. Furthermore, when non-pecuniary damages are awarded, they must be proportional to the seriousness of the damage caused and not so excessive as to have a discouraging effect on journalism.

In order to solve these problems, the Independent Journalism Center developed a draft law on the freedom of speech³ that was publicly debated in a round table on 11 December 2006 and that is currently being reviewed by a working group of Parliament mainly composed of representatives of public authorities and headed by the Deputy Speaker, Maria Postoico. The draft law aims to guarantee the right to freedom of speech and information and to create a fair balance between ensuring the right to freedom of speech and information and the right to protection of other personal non-property rights (honor, dignity and privacy). The need for such laws is explained by the fact that Moldova inadequately applies European standards on the freedom of speech in lawsuits on defamation and privacy. In addition, there are a number of problems that could be solved by means of better regulations. The adoption of such laws would offer the specific protection necessary for Moldovan journalism.

The draft law does the following:

- stresses freedom of speech without ignoring other individual rights including the right to privacy that is inadequately treated by the legislation in force;
- lays down the special status of mass media and describes in detail the interdiction of censorship;
- differentiates between facts and value judgments;
- establishes a statute of limitations;
- establishes a preliminary procedure for settling disputes on defamation etc.

3. Draft law, in Romanian and English: http://www.ijc.md/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=51&Itemid=76

Criminal Code

In April 2004, the Moldovan President presented a legislative initiative to exclude Article 170 from the Criminal Code. The draft law was adopted on 22 April 2004 and entered into force on 7 May upon its publication in the *Monitorul Oficial* (No.73–76).

The exclusion of Article 170 from the Criminal Code was a positive step, but slander was only partially excluded from the list of crimes as the Criminal Code preserved Article 304, “slandering a judge, a person conducting criminal investigations or a person contributing to rendering justice.” Excluding fully or partially this article from the Code or at least removing imprisonment as a consequence should be considered.

At the same time, the Criminal Code and Administrative Offence Code should include articles that would provide some protection to journalists, especially to investigative ones. For example, the old Criminal Code contained at least one article (140/1) stipulating punishment for persons guilty of persecuting citizens for submitting proposals, requests or complaints or for the criticism contained therein as well as for criticism made in a different form. The current Code does not provide any protection for journalists or citizens who are intimidated because they expressed critical opinions.

Code on Administrative Offences

The Code on Administrative Offences contains Article 47/2 (slander) and Article 47/3 (insult). These articles, in addition to their imperfect formulation, do not seem to have practical relevance and also cause a great deal of confusion in their application. Taking into account that the interests protected through these articles are mainly private and are protected by civil legislation, the opportunity to exclude them from the Code must be considered.

Law on Access to Information

Law No.982-XIV of 11 May 2000 on Access to Information is considered a great achievement in the spirit of democracy; however, all monitoring conducted so far, especially that by the Acces-info Center, has proved that implementing this law is extremely difficult⁴ despite the efforts made by nongovernment organizations (NGOs) to expedite the process. The main problem seems to be the mentality and the traditionally non-transparent behavior of public officials. The lack of access to information is the main obstacle faced by journalists

and is a reality that impedes the development of investigative journalism as a whole.

In cooperation with other NGOs, Acces-info has developed a draft law on transparency in decision making. If adopted, this law will contribute to the more active participation of the public in making decisions in the community interest. Although this draft law was apparently supported by the Government and even submitted to Parliament as a legislative initiative, the former withdrew its support immediately after submitting it. This fact strengthens the opinion that the authorities are reluctant to embrace the idea of real, and not formal, transparency.

The Government must adopt active measures to counteract the traditional secrecy persisting among public authorities and to encourage openness and transparency. This must be stimulated through internal organizational reform as well as through the adoption of necessary legal acts, especially of laws that would regulate the participation of the public in decision making.

Press Law

The Press Law adopted in 1994 regulates the activities of periodicals and of press agencies. Unfortunately, this law contains a large number of obsolete and inadequate regulations. Some of its provisions are very dangerous and have even led to Moldova's conviction in the ECHR (*Kommersant Moldova vs. Moldova*). For example, the activity of a periodical can be suspended for any “systematic violation of the law” (Article 7 paragraph [4]). The law does not specify any gradation of the type of violations nor does it ensure that the severity of the sanction is proportional to that of the violation.

The provisions on registering publications are both incomplete (they do not specify the documents to be submitted for registration) and excessive (they specify only internal organizational aspects that should not be stipulated by law) and in general do not comply with Civil Code provisions (the Press Law establishes the legal organizational form of a periodical publication that is not stipulated by the Civil Code).

The law is not more useful in the section “rights and obligations” which stipulates rights that cannot be exercised in the current context (Article 20 paragraph [1], part j): “incentives ... in transportation and telecommunications, in hotel accommodation”. The law does not establish any guarantees for implementing the rights provided for journalists.

The evasive provisions on the accreditation of journalists (Article 21 paragraph [2]) lead to the appearance of arbitrary

4. Aplicarea Legii privind accesul la informație: Raport de monitorizare (Application of the Law on Access to Information: Monitoring Report) / colab. Victor Panțiru, ...; coord.: Vasile Spinei, Chișinău, F.E.-P. Tipografia Centrală, 2007. – 200 p.



Olivia Pirtac, instructor, and School of Advanced Journalism students tackling issues on the legal framework that regulates media activity.

Media Law Course, Chişinău, November 15-19, 2007.

internal regulations for accreditation. Most of them are not published, and accreditation is sometimes refused to journalists arbitrarily. This hampers their access to information and undermines the freedom of press in Moldova.

The adoption of the draft law on the freedom of speech could solve many of these problems. The Press Law could be repealed as soon as the problem of registration of periodicals is regulated by a different legal act.

B. State Support of the Press

There is no state press in strong democracies. Moldova, however, has many periodicals that are funded by district councils that act as mouthpieces of the funding authorities. This direct subsidizing causes huge problems for independent newspapers that must bear the consequences of such unfair competition. The government must again consider denationalizing the press in order to ensure equal opportunities for all mass media in market economy conditions.

At the same time, indirect support for the press based on the model existing in other European countries is necessary and welcome because the Moldovan press is weak and is finding it difficult to develop. Public authorities must therefore undertake part of the responsibility and expense for the development and consolidation of the press.

For instance, the Association of Independent Press (API) requested the Parliamentary Commission for Culture, Science, Education, Youth, Sport and Mass Media in a 2005 letter⁵ to consider the following possibilities:

5. Source: Petru Macovei, President of the Association of Independent Press.

1. cancel the value-added tax (20%) on advertising in information and opinion newspapers (not advertising or erotic newspapers);
2. cancel the withholding tax (5%) on information and opinion newspapers or grant the status of public utility to such newspapers;
3. freeze newspaper distribution tariffs collected by the state company Poşta Moldovei as of 1 January 2005;
4. provide subsidies from the public budget for the publication and distribution of newspapers in the amount of 0.2 lei for each copy confirmed by official press distributors;
5. cancel the local tax (5%) on distribution of advertising.

Also, API considers it important to establish by law the obligation to provide funds from the public budget to support the press or to ensure information is disseminated to the public in an open, transparent and competitive manner.

On 11 February 1999, Parliament adopted Decision No.277-XIV on the Concept of State Support and Promotion of Mass Media from 1999 to 2003 (MO No.22-23 of 4 March 1999) that stipulated many specific measures aimed at strengthening the freedom and independence of mass media. Unfortunately, applying the concept was extremely unsatisfactory, and for the most part it was not implemented. Nonetheless, the idea itself of adopting a concept for the development of mass media by which the state would officially make long- and medium-term commitments deserves to be seriously approached.

C. Publicizing Court Hearings and Mass Media

Publicizing court hearings is a principle laid down in Moldovan legislation; nonetheless, the articles of the Civil

Procedural Code and Criminal Procedural Code that regulate the application of this principle and the use of technical means during court hearings are insufficiently precise and clear thus offering the possibility for excessive freedom of interpretation. This makes journalists feel unprotected from arbitrary judgments issued by judges. A large number of judges do not allow the press access to hearings even without declaring the hearings closed, thus violating the legislation.

This current situation as well as the legislation in force cause “judicial reporting” to be an almost non-existent genre in the Moldovan press and are also a serious impediment to investigative journalism.

D. Law No.54-XV of 21 Feb 2003 on Counteracting Extremist Activity

This Law raises multiple problems regarding freedom of speech and press freedom because it does the following:

- uses general and extremely vague provisions that could include expressions and actions as extremist activities that must be tolerated in a democratic society;
- targets media organizations and certain public associations which in principle is not necessary;
- generates censorship and self-censorship as a consequence of the sanctions that can be imposed for conducting extremist activities as well as various procedures provided for by the law;
- raises the issue of punishment for certain categories of expressions considered extremist;
- duplicates provisions contained in other laws and contains contradictory provisions and deficiencies.

Taking into account these problems, we suggest repealing this law or making substantial amendments thereto. According to European standards, speeches inciting hatred or violence must be forbidden; however, due to the excessively broad terms contained in the Moldovan law, a speech that must be tolerated in a democratic society may also be labeled as “extremist.”

E. Censorship

Article 34 paragraph (5) of the Moldovan Constitution says, “Public mass media are not subject to censorship.” Not a single legal act, however, defines the term censorship, and there

is no efficient mechanism for counteracting it or for sanctioning censors. The legislation also lacks a provision that would forbid creating and fully or partially funding organizations, institutions or positions having the task to censor public information. The constitutional provision that censorship is forbidden without supportive legislative provisions does not offer guarantees in this regard. There are many cases of direct or indirect censoring of material in mass media outlets.

It is necessary to provide criminal and civil and liability for the following:

- censorship;
- illegally interfering in and violating the editorial autonomy of a publication;
- confiscating/illegally destroying a print-run or of a part thereof;
- obliging a journalist to publish/disseminate information or to abstain from publishing/disseminating information.

F. Legislation on Audiovisual Media

The situation of Moldovan audiovisual media is generally appreciated as precarious, especially due to the censorship noted in public broadcasting institutions, to the political control over the regulatory authority in this area, to the increased risk of suspension of broadcasts of institutions not affiliated with state authorities and to sanctioning and impeding the development of independent broadcasters.

Although the Broadcasting Code is a recent act that entered into force on 18 Aug 2006, it is imperfect and favors abuses. The Code contains many ambiguous provisions that impede the development of the national audiovisual media. It abounds in general formulas for guaranteeing the independence and freedom of broadcasters but does not stipulate clear mechanisms that would truly ensure their independence and freedom. The Code further does not ensure enough mechanisms for the autonomous and independent functioning of the regulatory authority in this area and neglects essential principles that ensure the functionality and complexity of a true public broadcasting service. The Broadcasting Code thus requires amendments in order to truly adjust the national legal framework to European standards to support the independence and development of the national audiovisual media.⁶

**Eugeniu RÎBCA,
Olivia PÎRȚAC**

6. See detailed analyses of the Broadcasting Code on http://soros.md/programs/mass_media/

A Denunciation of Censorship and Self-Censorship

"I know someone who was accused of premeditated murder but bought his freedom for a large sum of money. There are cases of corruption that are accepted as normal phenomena by the largest part of our society," a reader stated a few days ago during a public debate organized by *Ziarul de Gardă*. I had asked him how protected citizens are in the current conditions in our country. He was answering bravely and sincerely, and we were planning to publish his opinion in the newspaper with his name and picture. We were not at a live show on radio or television, so I started thinking about the risks entailed by this person's open and free manner of speaking if we were to make his identity public. The first risk would come from the person suspected of murder because he would never want to have witnesses alive and free to speak. The second risk would come from the investigative agencies that would possibly insist on finding out who made the decision and the circumstances in which a murder suspect remained free. Also problematic could be the reaction of the community that would attempt to find out as many salient details about this case as possible. In such a situation, the journalist's source of information would be an actual witness. Given that Parliament has not yet passed a law on protecting witnesses, this risk would be quite serious.

Fear to Speak Out

In fact, such cases are not very frequent. People in our country prefer to keep silent despite questioning from journalists or representatives of law-enforcement agencies. What determines that a person will keep silent when they hold important data and information that could contribute to solving such cases? It is mostly fear as it is well known that the truth can be tough and few can accept its consequences.

How should journalists proceed when facing such a dilemma given that a new type of self-censorship has entered their professional lives in Moldova? We have noticed that for some time now they have not been afraid so much about what may happen to them when they make shocking disclosures about abuses in society as they have been afraid for the sources they interview when making investigations. Because of their fears of the problems their sources may face, journalists try to protect their identities by choosing not to write about such cases.

Certainly this newer type of censorship—self-censorship—is increasingly dangerous for the quality of journalism; in fact, it is even more dangerous than the outright censorship that exists in undemocratic societies. Journalists who worked in

the Soviet media cannot forget the impact on radio, television or print media of the ideological authorities of the single ruling party. Their only mission was censorship. At times it became almost ridiculous when only certain cameramen were "delegated" to film party leaders so that they somehow were no longer bald and looked younger, more handsome or even more intelligent. Censorship was practiced very scrupulously so that no word reached the public without the signature in red of certain officers of the special division called LIT. Nobody was beyond LIT's restrictions under any circumstances; those who ignored them ran the risk of being fired or even of being accused of high treason.

The fall of the Soviet system brought in an era of spontaneous freedom in which both journalists and media consumers sometimes lost orientation and balance. Television became a rostrum, a political bureau and a decision maker. It became so influential that it drew the envy of the politicians of the time thus unleashing a fight for power over this influential means of communication.

A Censorship Case Has Reached the European Court of Human Rights

In 1994 when a political neo-communist agrarian regime was in power in Moldova, the so-called national television station was brutally censored (in 1991 and 1992 this station was in fact national). This resulted in the exclusion, especially from newscasts, of subjects that might have compromised state authorities. TV viewers were simply not informed of certain events or topics because of censorship. Rules became more and more absurd day by day from cutting references to the Romanian language or Romanian land from texts to neglecting the most important personalities in public life in Moldova like writers, scientists and professors, especially those who regarded themselves as Romanians. The opinions of the intelligentsia disappeared from TV programs on Moldova's main TV station, and sources were mainly selected based on their politics, so people watching TV programs were getting their information about current events through sources that lacked credibility. This situation remains unchanged even after the so-called transformation of the state company Teleradio-Moldova into a public institution because newscasts and debate programs are not exempt from censorship.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is now reviewing the case of a team of journalists formerly from



Alex Ulmanu, instructor, and School of Advanced Journalism students discussing ethical problems faced by Moldovan journalists. Media Ethics Course, Chişinău, October 22-26, 2007

Teleradio-Moldova who have accused this institution of censorship and restriction of information offered to taxpayers. According to the attorneys representing the plaintiffs, such cases are not so frequent at ECHR, so Moldova has become an unhappy exception even in this regard.

Self-censorship, however, does not have a chance to be denounced at ECHR. It comes from inside journalists and grows to be part of their lifestyles when society does not offer them enough freedom of expression. This phenomenon, which is becoming increasingly more obvious, makes press subjects become less credible and sometimes even incredible when by trying to protect our sources, we avoid disclosing the identity of those who offered us data and opinions for investigations.

Under such conditions, the sources without which no investigative articles can be written also become increasingly unsure, more evasive and more cautious, and this fact has an impact on the quality of journalism. As a result, self-censorship makes media subjects adopt a certain style of communication with the press that makes the articles published in the Moldovan media suffer from primitivism and a lack of arguments that finally preclude them from having an impact on society. At the same time, society as a whole becomes inhibited and disinterested.

Excessive Caution about Words

The political and economic conditions in Moldova also directly or indirectly restrict the content of publications

in our country. Nobody doubts that the press should exist on advertising, but in order to do so, the Moldovan press must be careful what it writes about. Such caution has become excessive in the past five to seven years stifling ideas and the coverage of difficult subjects and topics of current interest. Although nobody guarantees that such prudence will bring more advertising clients to a newspaper, press managers often try to temper tones that could drive advertising clients away. Totally immoral situations can even occur when advertising clients dictate that journalists do not cover their shady or even fraudulent dealings if they have signed advertising agreements with their media outlets.

Political analyses containing critical notes about the government are also unacceptable to advertisers. They openly say that they cannot risk placing ads in a newspaper that has critical opinions about how Moldova is administered. Thus, our independent press cannot rely on ad revenues anymore, so the only solution for financial stability remains increasing print-runs. The print-run, however, is directly dependent on the few lei paid monthly by the Government as salaries and pensions to its citizens.

Though these arguments are against censorship and self-censorship, nevertheless in certain circumstances, self-censorship remains an indispensable element in modern journalism. When it happens because of common sense criteria, it is natural and in keeping with producing investigations without prejudicing the quality of journalism.

Aneta GROSU

State Support of the Press: Towards Transparency and Responsibility

The press is free of governmental control in countries with longstanding democratic traditions. The authorities do not attempt to influence editorial policy indirectly through inconvenient fiscal measures, by favoring specific media outlets with state advertising or by exerting pressure on advertisers. Media conditions are favorable in strong democracies. There the media can exercise one of its main functions without impediments, namely making public authorities more transparent and responsible to the public.

The situation is different in transition countries including in the Republic of Moldova where the press does not entirely fulfill its role of watchdog of democracy. The lack of transparency with regard to media ownership and public funding of the media make it possible for the ruling party to maintain overt or covert control over certain media institutions. The authorities interfere in the media market by allotting funds to government media institutions and to those sympathizing with the party in power. In addition to state newspapers that are nothing but tools for promoting government policy, some private newspapers also benefit from state subsidies. Advertising is also directed to them from certain state institutions and public companies, and their print-runs are increased by subscriptions paid for from public money. Many businesses do not buy advertising in the independent press in order to avoid possible problems with the authorities; instead they put their ads in the newspapers indicated by the government.¹

Direct Funding of the Press

The authorities are able to control the media due to the direct and indirect funding that the government provides to certain publications. At present, there are local publications in Moldova that mainly cover the activities of district administrations that are still funded with public money. They also reflect the government's activities if the local administration is headed by the ruling party. For example, 6,704,900 lei were allocated in 2006 for the development of 25 district and regional periodicals. The municipal councils of Chișinău and Bălți decided to allocate 3,200,000 lei and 324,000 thousand lei respectively to their mouthpieces. District council newspapers were allocated 117,000 lei each.²

Another type of direct funding is one-time financial aid. An example in this regard which has been broadly discussed in the press is that of former government newspapers that have benefited from such aid in past years. Government Decision No. 1499 of 28 December 2006 ordered payment of 376,800 lei to *Moldova Suverană* and 81,300 lei to *Nezavisimaia Moldova* from public funds to pay off their debts to Universul Publishing House. Justifying that allocation to publications that were privatized in 2005, Victor Stepaniuc, a communist MP, told the press that the government had a free hand and the moral right to help those publications that covered the government's policy better.

This decision brought adverse reactions from journalists and civil society. Petru Macovei, Executive Director of the Association of the Independent Press, for instance, stated that the decision proved once again that the current government had violated the idea of denationalizing the press. "Although the government has officially given up its role as publisher, it still covers the largest part of these newspapers' publishing costs."³

Indirect or Masked Financial Support

Another way of funding the press is by redirecting state advertising to newspapers that are loyal to the authorities. One example that was broadly covered by the media was a directive issued by the government in 2001 addressed to ministries and departments in which they were asked, "...in view of publicizing advertising information, to publish their advisory notes, reports etc. in the newspapers *Moldova Suverană* and *Nezavisimaia Moldova*."

The opposition media outlets are the ones that suffer most of all as a result of this tactic as they can't compete with the newspapers funded and protected by the state. Clients avoid placing their ads in independent newspapers in order not to fall out with the authorities. So, while some newspapers have only one or two advertisements per issue, newspapers supporting the government, even though they publish many fewer copies, are full of ads. Nobody dares to buy ads in an opposition newspaper some media managers say. They think that the government can cause big problems for business people who violate the unofficial embargo.⁴ The same embargo is on public service advertis-

1. Media Sustainability Index (MSI) - Europe and Eurasia; www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2006/moldova.asp

2. Deetizarea presei la moldoveni; www.api.md/articles/2697/index.html

3. Deetizarea presei la moldoveni; www.api.md/articles/2697/index.html

4. Întunecatul prezent și incertul viitor al presei independente din Republica Moldova; <http://www.rostonline.org/rost/apr2003/presa.shtml>



Launching of the project “State authorities and news media - towards transparency and accountability”, Chişinău, December 12th, 2007. From left to right: Iulia Chirnițchi, OSCE Mission in Moldova, Ioana Avadani, Center for Independent Journalism (București), Vasile Spinei, Acces Info, Liliana Vițu, Eurasia Foundation.

ing promoted by the government, ministers, departments and state institutions which is mostly published in the state press or one that is loyal to the state authorities. For example, education authorities say that when publishing promotional announcements or when conducting admission campaigns they are usually obliged to publish and pay for ads only in pro-government publications and are forbidden to publish advertising in opposition newspapers.⁵

Also, a lot has been written about the abusive way of subscribing great numbers of people to publications that support the government's policy. Another government directive provided for subscriptions to a number of newspapers paid for with public money. Based on this directive, Government agencies issued their own directives in which they obliged the institutions they supervised to subscribe to the publications *Nistru*, *Moldova Suverană*, *Nezavisimaya Moldova*, *Trud*, *Vremea* and *Comunistul*.⁶ The same procedure was also used during the subscription campaign for this year. For instance, the Ministry of Education ordered in circular note no. 09/2-13-899 of 30 October 2006 that the agencies under its responsibility ensure that over 1,000 schools would subscribe to pro-government newspapers. Ministry of Education representatives say that, “Independent publications self-advertise, whereas *Moldova Suverană* and *Nezavisimaya Moldova* are recommended by us, thus facilitating the acquaintance of subscribers with the Government's activities.”⁷

5. Ministrul Țircun obligă scolile să aboneze ziarele pro-guvernamentale; <http://garda.com./106/investigatii/>.

6. Libertatea presei de exprimare și informare în Republica Moldova. Raport anual 2005. www.ijc.md/Publicatii/mlu/RAPORT_ANUAL_2005.pdf

7. Ministrul Țircun obligă scolile să aboneze ziarele pro-guvernamentale. <http://garda.com./106/investigatii/>

Support of the Press by the State: the European Experience

The practice of having the media supported by the state is common in many European countries where the press benefits from state budget subsidies. In 2006, for example, the European Commission approved media support plans in Denmark, Poland, Ireland and France. Thanks to those plans, a number of Danish newspapers benefited from grants in the total amount of 1.3 million euros for the distribution of newspapers. The plans for Poland, Ireland and France provided for supporting the production of documentary films and promoting young talent. When adopting this decision, the European Commission guided itself by the principles of promoting media pluralism. Another example in this regard is Lithuania which has had a state fund for media support since 1996. The state allocates around 1.5 million euros annually to implement various cultural and educational programs. Books are published and documentaries are produced; the press is supported both at the national and local levels. However, decisions to allocate the money are made only after organizing transparent contests in which the projects are evaluated by representatives of various areas.

Experts think that such financial support would be welcome in Moldova as well, as the development of Moldovan press is hindered by various factors. The press, however, should not be supported on a client basis setting editorial policy with regard to the government in power. All media institutions should operate under equal conditions and enjoy the same chances of obtaining public money, that is, from the public that they serve.

Daniela BORODACHI

The Recipe for Success of a Local Newspaper

Some newspaper directors in our country say that the press cannot be a profitable business in Moldova at the national level or even less at the local level.

This statement is partially true as the market mechanisms that stimulate the publication business in other European countries do not work in our country. Namely, the legislative and fiscal framework does not stimulate the development of media businesses. The market is relatively small with increasingly fewer readers due to the exodus of Moldovans to foreign countries in search of work. Big advertisers can be counted on one's fingers, and some of them are persuaded to place ads only in the press that is loyal to the authorities. In addition, the main press distributor, the state company Poșta Moldovei, imposes discriminatory tariffs on media outlets. However, in spite of impediments due to poverty in Moldova and of those imposed on publishers by politicians who do not want to give up control over the media and people's minds, there are encouraging examples of newspapers that succeed in ensuring their economic viability even under such conditions.

Rejecting the assumption that local Moldovan press cannot, by definition, become a successful business, there are a growing number of success stories especially at the local level. A lot has already been written and is known about the newspapers *Unghiul* from Ungheni and *SP* from Bălți that are led by very skillful media managers. Two more independent local newspapers have grown considerably from a managerial point of view in the past two years and have managed to establish themselves economically. They are the publications *Cuvântul* from Rezina and *Observatorul de Nord* from Soroca. Their subscription lists are growing, and so are their print-runs and geographical areas of distribution. Both newspapers have managed to penetrate the markets of their neighboring districts where they have asserted themselves as suppliers of varied and objective information. Let's explore the recipe for success of the weekly publication *Cuvântul*.

An Independent Newspaper as a Form of Protest

Cuvântul came out in 1995 when almost the entire Moldovan press was subordinated to the state. Dissatisfied with the fact that the district newspaper *Farul Nistorean* headed by Tudor Iașcenco was presenting critical opinions about some community issues, including the stands taken by the opposition, the agrarian majority of the district council dismissed the newspaper's editor-in-chief. As a sign of protest, almost the entire newspaper team resigned. Later,

the court reinstated Mr. Iașcenco, but the Rezina journalists did not wish to return to a "state" newspaper and registered an independent periodical publication. The first issue of *Cuvântul* came out on 1 January 1996 with a print-run of 700 copies. Of course, Rezina authorities felt threatened and tried to block the appearance of a newspaper that they could not control. "Surprises" started to occur even by the second issue. The managers of the printing house in the neighboring town of Râbnîța refused to print *Cuvântul* and admitted that they had received instructions from the Transnistrian authorities who had responded, in their turn, to the requests of local Rezina authorities. For eight months, *Cuvântul* journalists had to travel to Criuleni, a town located 150 kilometers from Rezina, to print the newspaper. Despite that obstacle, the newspaper never missed an issue.

Service in Readers Interest

There are not so many local newspapers in the country that can be said to be public opinion builders. *Cuvântul* is one of them as this publication has weight at the community level and enjoys the credibility of both ordinary people and the authorities. The respect of the latter for the newspaper is also based on the understanding that it closely monitors local governance and watches that public funds are used according to the law. Very many people in Rezina remember even today how a press campaign initiated by *Cuvântul* managed to repeal a government decision to store unusable pesticides from the entire country in the district of Rezina. The series of investigations "Rezina-Style Governance" published in 2006 and 2007, unmasked the mayor's illegal activities with public funds. The mayor lost the lawsuit he filed against the investigative journalists as well as the election in which he was running for a second term.

Cuvântul has remained a true public service that has responded to its readers' interests from the beginning of its publication until now. The result is obvious. *Cuvântul* has a sound and stable contingent of readers and is distributed in four neighboring districts: Rezina, Șoldănești, Orhei and Telenеști. According to media audience studies conducted in Moldova by TNS Ukraine, *Cuvântul* has consistently ranked 8th or 9th (among over 60 titles) in past years among national and local weeklies published in the country. The *Cuvântul* team has won three "journalistic apples" for its professional performance from the Chișinău Press Club and the Independent Journalism Center (IJC). The newspaper has also won another 40 or so prizes in various journalistic contests.



*Tudor Iascenco, one of the winners
of the award "Ten journalists of the year."
Chişinău, December, 2006.*

Newspaper as Business

It is harder to develop an independent newspaper business in a provincial town like Rezina with a population of only 9,000 inhabitants and a relatively modest economic infrastructure. It is harder, but not impossible. With its attractive editorial content, *Cuvântul* has asserted itself on the media markets of the districts of Rezina and Şoldăneşti and

is gaining territory in the districts of Orhei and Teleneshti. Its total print-run has constantly increased: in 2005 it was 3,900 copies, in 2006 it was 4,600 and in 2007 it reached 5,200. It comes out in 10–14 pages in A3 format. Although the newspaper has not yet developed its own marketing service, its advertising revenues (ads account for nearly 30% of the space) have also increased from 120,000 lei in 2005 to 147,000 lei in 2006 to 155,000 lei in the first 10 months of 2007. However, due to the fact that circa 90% of the newspaper's print-run is distributed by subscription and postal distribution services are extremely costly, the newspaper's income is not so large and its profit is minimal. Nonetheless, *Cuvântul* has covered its production costs in the past years from subscriptions and ad sales, and the external funding it obtains now and then is not used anymore to cover budget gaps.

According to the newsroom's business plan, the weekly's print-run is expected to increase to 6,500 copies in the coming years, its length is to reach 16 pages, and the revenues from the newspaper's retail sales and advertising are to increase to 200,000 lei. In addition, the newspaper aims to modernize its design and to develop its own distribution network. *Cuvântul* is also planning to find a way to attract young staff.

The *Cuvântul* Phenomenon

So, what is the key to *Cuvântul*'s success and what ensures its viability in the media market? Tudor Iascenco, the newspaper's director, thinks that there are at least two answers to this question. First, success is guaranteed by a team of professionals who are motivated by and devoted to a newspaper that is close to its readers' needs. Secondly, most newsroom employees are also stakeholders in *Cuvântul* SRL (a limited liability company). Thus, each of them is personally interested in seeing the newspaper prosper, and each of them contributes to what we can call the *Cuvântul* phenomenon.

Petru MACOVEI,
AIP Executive Director

Advertising in the Press: A Strong or Weak Link?

Advertising is one of the “whales” supporting the world of the press in most countries. The functioning of the advertising market certainly depends in part on the specifics of each region.

If ad revenues practically allow mass media in Western European countries and even in most Eastern European ones not to depend on political and financial groups' interests, the situation in Transnistria is entirely different, and it is way too early to speak about a supporting “whale” in this case.

According to Transnistrian laws, periodicals not entered in the state registry as advertising publications may include up to 30% of advertising in the printed space of an issue. Ad space in most newspapers ranges between 5 and 25%. In order to find out why this is so and how newspapers manage to survive, we will review advertising space offered by the Transnistrian print media.

To make it easier, we will divide this region's print media into three arbitrary groups: (i) newspapers that are funded by various entities; (ii) self-sufficient independent publications and (iii) advertising and entertainment publications that are also self-sufficient.

The first group includes three newspapers: *Pridnestrovie* printed in Russian, *Adevărul nistrean*, which comes out in Romanian using the Cyrillic alphabet and *Gomin*, published in Ukrainian.

Pridnestrovie is the newspaper of mass appeal socially and politically and comes out daily from Tuesday to Friday in four A2 pages; the Saturday issue comes out in A3 format on 12 pages. There is an advertising division in the newsroom.

The vast majority of the advertisements published in this official, “government” newspaper are placed by state agencies about tenders, auctions or announcements about the sale of state-owned assets. There are also advertisements placed by private commercial and service companies.

After skimming through the newspapers, one can notice that most advertisers prefer to place ads in the Saturday issue. The publication's advertising division admitted that ads are a good financial resource for the newspaper but that

it would be unable to survive on ad revenues only. In fact, only 20% of the cost of an issue of *Pridnestrovie* is covered by advertising revenues. Publicity division specialists think that the main problem is the rather low incomes of most of the population as well as of the small and medium-sized businesses in the region. That is why few wish to invest in ads. Private announcements of estate sales or the provision of services are usually placed free of charge in specialized publications such as *Makler*.

To attract advertisers *Pridnestrovie* has a trump card: after a client places three advertisements in the newspaper, all other ads will benefit from a discount of up to 30%. The advertising division thus does its best to improve the situation.

Adevărul nistrean also needs advertising, but it is virtually missing from its pages. The deputy editor-in-chief thinks that the language factor plays a role not to be neglected in the case of this newspaper. The publication is trying to set up an advertising division in its newsroom, and persons wishing to work there have already been contacted. Ads will be published in any of the three languages acknowledged as official in Transnistria. *Adevărul nistrean* agrees to publish any kind of advertising as this would cover a part no matter how small of their costs.

The publication of this newspaper is funded exclusively from the state budget. The money is used to pay salaries and cover printing costs. The newspaper undoubtedly needs funding to be able to keep up to date with information and to attract additional editorial staff. The creation of an advertising division in the newsroom could greatly help this newspaper's business.

The editor of the publication *Gomin* is more emphatic when he says that periodicals that do not specialize in advertising would not be able to survive on ads. The newspaper's revenues from advertising are minimal because advertisers are not eager to publish their ads in a Ukrainian language newspaper. The newspaper's advertising policy has a specific feature: advertisements with a potentially negative impact on the region's population are not accepted for publication. In this case, self-censorship is the rule. For example, announcements about work abroad that come from suspicious companies are not accepted for publication. The newsroom does not have a special adver-

tising division, and ad revenues cover only 5% of publication costs.

The second group includes municipal publications. *Novoye vremya* is considered a municipal newspaper in Bender as is *Dnestrovskaya pravda* in Tiraspol. The newspaper *Energhetik* comes out in the small town of Dnestrovsk and is in fact a municipal newspaper.

Novoye vremya comes out three times per week in A4 format on 4 pages. The fourth page is reserved for advertising that accounts for 25% of the newspaper. Ads are selected by the employees of a division especially created for this purpose. The newspaper receives various categories of advertisements both from commercial companies and from individuals.

As the newsroom's employees say, this relatively high amount of advertising is due to a certain type of mentality of the local population. People say, "I had better put an ad about selling my sofa in our town newspaper. Why should I spend money to go to another town to publish two or three words in a national newspaper?"

The mass-appeal, social-political newspaper *Dnestrovskaya pravda* also comes out three times a week. Its last page is also reserved for advertising; however, in this case it is more private companies than individuals that place ads. The explanation is simple: the newspaper *Pridnestrovyie* also comes out in Tiraspol, and the ad space therein costs less which makes it more attractive taking into account that incomes in this region are rather low, and each person carefully counts every penny.

Dnestrovskaya pravda, however, has its trademark: image building publicity. Its employees admit that advertising can cover only half of their expenses and conclude that, "It is impossible for a small print-run newspaper to survive on advertising."

The newspaper *Energhetik* is *de facto* a municipal publication but *de jure* is registered as being the mouthpiece of the Moldovan Power Station. Its pages contain advertisements, but its charter does not provide for the provision of advertising services; therefore, all announcements coming from the town's inhabitants and the administration are published free of charge.

We included into the third group independent, informative publications such as *Profsoiuznye Vesti* (Tiraspol), *Novaya Gazeta* (Bender) and *Dobryi Den'* (Râbnîța). The lack of

regular subsidies made these publications start looking for other means and ways to exist.

The weekly *Profsoiuznye vesti* has acquired the reputation of an interesting newspaper for the readers on both sides of the Nistru River. Its editorial policy aims to offer truthful, good quality information to the readers. It does not publish too much advertising. It usually offers space only to businesses.

Its source of revenue to cover costs is first of all subscriptions. The weekly does not have a special advertising division. Such a division may be set up in the future, which would lead to an increase in the publication's size.

The creation of such a division seemed pointless two or three years ago as there was a decrease in the economic activity in the region at that time, and the population's purchasing power was very low. The present economic development trends have set the editors of many publications thinking about expanding including their advertising space.

Novaya gazeta is a rather popular newspaper that includes topical supplements. It comes out on a weekly basis with a special supplement for advertising entitled "Vash dosug." In addition to the special supplement, advertising can also be found on the first page above the newspaper's name. The four pages of *Vash dosug* include TV programs (2.5 pages) and advertisements (1.5 pages).

Readers also receive a topical supplement dedicated to construction and renovation once a month entitled "Stroika i remont." Color images are printed on half of the supplement's 12 small-format pages. Ads offered by small and medium-sized businesses prevail.

The editor confesses that ad revenues cover only a certain part of printing costs. The newsroom is good to any advertising agent, and during its ten years of existence, *Novaya gazeta* has gathered a circle of advertising agents about which it cares a lot.

To maintain its position in the print media market, the publication ensured that advertising offers increased along with the number of subscribers, newsstand buyers and distributors. At present, the newspaper is sold not only from Camenca to Slobozia but also in Chișinău, Orhei and Bălți.

Advertising represents for *Novaya gazeta* a source of income that allows it to exist and develop. It is true that complications also appear. First of all, the law limits the ad space for

newspapers that are not specialized in advertising. Secondly, subsidized publications take advantage of this by decreasing the price on a centimeter of advertising thus creating unfair competition in the market.

In order to survive such unfair competition, it is necessary to attract as many readers as possible to increase the print-run. Many western newspapers that started with a print-run of several hundred copies proceeded in the same way. *Novaya gazeta* sells better through retailers although it has had the tendency in the past two or three years to balance this with subscription sales.

The weekly *Dobryi den'* that comes out in Râbnîța is almost impossible to find in Tiraspol, but this newspaper is so popular among the local population that its editors are in no hurry to cover the entire readership of Transnistria. Two of its eight pages are covered with ads that include congratulations and announcements of private companies. Advertising covers nearly one third of the eighth page.

In order to survive, the newsroom of this independent newspaper created an advertising supplement that turned into an independent, informative and entertaining publication with the name *Dobryi vecher* that comes out on 12 pages. The newspaper's first page also publishes advertisements for sales, purchases and services. The fifth to ninth pages include TV programs and advertisements.

The staff says that it is exactly this formula—two publications and one founder—that allows the newspaper to maintain its independent status and ensures an unbiased attitude when it publishes information paid from advertising and entertainment revenues. *Dobryi den'* and *Dobryi vecher* can be considered as the beginning of a corporate media system.

The last group is represented by two entertaining publications: the weeklies *Karavan* and *Yarmarka*.

Karavan is a newspaper for the entire family. This is exactly how it was conceived by its founders. The advertising division has been in place for a short time and has not had much experience yet. The appearance of advertisements on the weekly's pages does not constitute a vital financial necessity nor was it in the founders' plans. Advertising agents came by themselves to the newsroom to publish advertisements.

This is how the history of publication of advertising in *Karavan* began. The publication's editor emphasizes that the newspaper does not sell ads; it only draws the readers' attention. *Karavan* staff can help with the preparation of

ads. Only 7 of the publication's 64 pages (A4 format) contain ads; 3 pages are reserved for color ads. Advertisements can also be found on the first page beside the pictures of famous personalities. The idea came from the ad agents themselves: "We want you to place our announcement near a star's picture!" Two other pages contain announcements about the provision of services.

Karavan is not even close to being considered a newspaper on the edge of survival: it has been doing well and even very well for some time now. The publication's staff says that their sales greatly depend not so much on the editor, the informative and entertaining content of each issue or on the number of advertisements but rather on the spirit and attitude that the producers of this paper have toward their work.

Yarmarka is a similar publication with a volume of 72 pages of A4 format, ten of which contain advertising.

Six pages of ads for companies are in color. Three pages contain announcements from individuals printed in very small font. The first page contains ads from real estate agencies.

We understand that *Yarmarka* does not put revenues from advertising in first place. Regional ad agents are unable to pay as much as agents do in western countries for ads in print media. Unfortunately, this is the reason why advertising revenues are unable to help this region's newspapers survive.

In conclusion, let us try to answer this question: how can Transnistrian newspapers and magazines survive?

1. External funding: when a businessman or an organization needs the newspaper for its personal interests. Such publications usually go bankrupt. In such cases, the newspaper ceases to come out:
 - a) when it reaches the expected goal (for instance, a political one);
 - b) when the financier runs out of funds;
 - c) when the publisher, in the person of the financier, gets tired of an unprofitable project.
2. Advertising: The newspapers that fill the niche of advertising publications will never cede even a centimeter of this profitable ground. Therefore, declaring themselves advertising publications from the very beginning (in Transnistria they are *Makler* and *Vse*), they can make a profit both from publishing ads and from selling already printed ads. This is exactly what allows them not only to increase their revenues but also to extend their ad space.

The other publications have nothing left to do but to follow this process helplessly.

3. Establish a corporation: This is how a publication making a fabulous profit could support a less profitable but popular high quality newspaper through endowments because both publications would belong to one person or to one group of persons. This is the case of *Dobryi vecher* from Râbnița helping its close “relative” *Dobryi den* survive.

The only exception is that it is too early to speak about fabulous profit in the case of Transnistrian mass media.

4. Tax evasion (the most unpopular one): Some sources mention sometimes during hallway talk that the media would not survive today if there were not a certain economic flow generated by the grey market. However, we cannot affirm or deny such suppositions, and therefore we leave them to the publishers and tax authorities!

Svetlana SAVIELEVA

World History from the Perspective of Communication

The book by the British scientists Asa Briggs (the prominent British media historian and former rector at Worcester College, Oxford) and Peter Burke (professor of the history of culture at the University of Cambridge), *Mass Media. A Social History From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Polirom Publishing House, Iassy) should be, in my opinion, obligatory reading both for journalism students and for those wishing to study the history of the press independently.

I would like to note from the very beginning the authors' special approach in this 341-page study that incorporates the history of journalistic communication into the history of communication and means of communication that includes verbal and written communication, roads, navigation, typography, railways and ships, post, telegraph, telephony, cinema, computers, satellites and mobile telephony among others. These technical achievements are covered in the work's eight sections alongside the six types of media acknowledged as such at present: print media, press agencies, radio, television, and on-line and off-line press.

Although the authors conducted historical research on the media, they could not help referring to media studies (page 187). In my opinion, media studies cover three essential elements: working with sources (depending on the level of access of journalists to information, i.e., the degree of democratization of a society), editing texts and the effects of the press on the public (forming public opinion). More precisely, media studies track the relationship among these three elements: how the information obtained from sources becomes text/material and then the impact of the text on the public. Briggs and Burke do not deal with how the information collected from sources becomes journalistic text (their study is not a journalism textbook), but they do pay greater attention to the effects the press has on society as not by accident did they title their study "A Social



History" which is, in a way, a history of the effects of the media on the society. "It is generally accepted that these changes in the media have had significant social and cultural consequences. However, the nature and scope of these consequences are rather a matter in dispute. Are these consequences rather political or rather psychological? From a political perspective, do they favor democracy or dictatorship? From a psychological perspective, does reading encourage empathy with the others, or rather retreat into a personal world? Does television or the "Net" destroy communities or create new types of communities in which closeness is not so important?" (pages 21–22). These are only a few questions that Briggs and Burke ask themselves and try to answer.

The authors incline to the opinion that the media has a role and effects

on society. In this regard, they quote various opinions: "Samuel Hartlib, an East-European exile in Berlin, wrote in 1641 that 'the typographical art will spread knowledge so much that ordinary people, knowing their rights and freedoms, will not let themselves be governed by oppression any more,'" (page 27). The essential question according to Briggs and Burke is, "To what extent have the media and their messages changed people's attitudes and mentalities?" (page 89) "The invention of typography was discussed conventionally from the point of view of its value for the dissemination of ideas, and the even more significant contribution it made was stimulation of change, initiated a long time ago, of the relation between space and speech," (quoted from Walter Ong on page 28) in the sense that in the 16th century, information started to mean more to the eye than to the ear. However, the British authors do not assign a fundamental role to the media with regard to its impact on society. "It would be more realistic to consider typography, like the new means of communication from the previous epochs (for example, television), a catalyst that contributes to, rather than initiates, social changes" (page 31).

Briggs' and Burke's idea that the impact should be evaluated taking into account the media as a whole is also important. They also note the unquestionable role of the media in revolutions. "One can assert that, by only the simple gathering of masses of people, were the socially unfulfilled ones communicated intelligence and energy. As a good English observer wrote in 1823, before the invention of the word 'socialism,' active workers, put together, get their skills sharpened and improved by constant communication" (page 112).

In fact, such concepts as propaganda or censorship also appeared in the context of the role of the press (or typography) in situations of social disorder. "The development of adverse— but, retrospectively, complementary—institutions of propaganda and censorship was maybe an unavoidable consequence of the invention of typography, but they were for sure the result of the religious wars of the 16th century. Propaganda and censorship were religious phenomena before they become political" (page 82).

The authors dedicated significant space to the role of the press in stimulating the education of the public "[Newspapers] contain not only the elements of cognition, but also the incentive that makes one learn... It is necessary to see a people where newspapers do exist in order to learn the multitude of prejudices of all kinds, which they dissipate immediately and inevitably" (page 184).

I noted the authors' remark about the role of the media in the formation of a consumer society. "As the sociologist Colin Cambell proved, 18th century novels, like today's TV stations, allowed readers the indirect use of expensive consumption goods, also encouraging them to buy and thus acting as 'midwives' in what was called 'the birth of the consumer society,'" (page 58). Also, it is worth mentioning the explanation for the popularity of press items about famous people. "Many people buy a newspaper—Lippmann

acknowledged—because their own lives are so boring, that they want the borrowed emotion of reading about a number of imaginary people with whose wonderful vices they can identify in their fantasies" (page 187).

Each type of mass media has certainly had specific effects on the public. For example, "the radio was everywhere 'a good companion' that comforted and also entertained, informed and also educated, and everywhere was a real blessing for the blind, the sick, the lonely, or those bound to stay home" (page 209). On the other hand, we can speak about the negative effects of the media. For instance, "[The Internet] incorporated both content and context in its reporting and took into consideration information overwhelming techniques, control by embellishing things, disclosure that cannot be put on anyone's account, lies for which no one is responsible, all of them as part of the media process" (page 281).

The information presented by Briggs and Burke about the original meaning of the expression "fourth power of state" is also interesting. This expression is associated today with the three branches of power in the state: legislative, executive and judicial. The British historian Macaulay, who is said to have created this expression, was referring rather to the gallery occupied by the media in Parliament. The other state powers according to the medieval concept were the lay nobility, the religious nobility, and the people. The concept survived in Great Britain in the form of the two chambers of Parliament, and the new expression "the fourth power" was used by the newspaperman F. Knight Hunt in 1850 in a book about the press (page 177).

This study is extensive and the limited space in this article does not allow a full review; some readers will undoubtedly find important elements in this work that others might miss.

Dr. Aurelian LAVRIC

Anatol Golea: “Only Optimists Survive in Television”

How much has the Moldovan TV market grown?

It is hard to express an opinion in this regard. Generally speaking, I would say that such a thing does not exist yet, that is, it has not appeared yet: it is still evolving. Due to its geographical location and historical conditions, the Republic of Moldova is situated at the intersection of at least two cultures. Most of the people speak Russian and Romanian, some speak English, French and especially lately, Italian. Thanks to the broad possibilities offered by modern technical equipment, many citizens of our country watch Romanian and Russian TV stations as well as European ones, discovering programs that outrun ours by far.

Why do you think that this happens?

Definitely not because the Moldovan specialists are less talented. A large number of producers, cameramen, presenters and actors from Chişinău have left the country and have successfully found work in Russia, Romania, Europe, USA and even in China. Their names are well known; many of them have received prestigious international awards.

Their activities at home were limited by the lack of funds. Television is an interesting toy but a very costly one. Unfortunately, the limited market, disloyal competition of other countries' TV stations as well as faulty legislation do not presently allow our stations and producers to assert themselves fully. At present, nobody wants to invest significant amounts in this area, and what is nonetheless produced is based solely on enthusiasm.

By the way, the situation in cinematography is analogous. A huge increase in interest in cinematography is now occurring in the whole world. People go to the cinema, including in our country; new films appear everywhere. It is not a problem that many of them are rather inferior serials that will be forgotten because the good films that appear will remain. In Moldova, no such films are presently made, and this is unfortunate.

Could the state contribute to the development of television?

It should at least not be an impediment to its development. It should stimulate this process, including by adopting good laws. The first steps are presently being taken—rather hesitating steps.



How do you appraise the new Broadcasting Code?

As being one of the necessary steps to move forward. During the drafting of the Code, its authors aimed at jumping from the totalitarian Soviet system into a civilized European one. Sometimes they managed to do that, but not in all cases. That is why various problems have arisen. It is known for instance that during this year, the new Broadcasting Coordinating Council tried to play the role of a suppressive body. But CCA should, in fact, help those working in the field in order to create a prestigious television industry with common goals. I hope that the latest reshuffles at CCA will improve the situation.

Do you think that the establishment of public television in Moldova has been successful?

My view coincides in this regard with that of the majority of the population. And this majority does not watch

Moldova 1 or watches it only in certain villages where they cannot connect to other stations and where no cable television is in place.

When creating or remaking television, it is necessary to clearly know what the goals are and to impose certain conditions: it should be either private or state or public. First of all, the sources of funding should be taken into account. If they are private and commercial, it should support itself from advertising aiming to make profit. If it is state owned, it must be adequately funded from the state budget. If it is public, its source of funding should rely on a system of subscriptions or fees—call them what you want—from taxpayers. And nobody should try to convince me that our population would disagree, given today's economic conditions and taking into account the poor level of television, with paying two or three lei as a television tax. When the citizens pay, the level of the programs will improve because we all will have the right to request quality, and television staff would be even more stimulated to work.

The current state of things in public television is confusing. Moldova 1 is a semi-commercial station because it tries hard to sell ads, and its management is in the humiliating position of begging for money from the state budget (thus, public television becomes totally dependent on the state), and there are no possibilities for quality television. I had an occasion recently to be at the public television station, and I was horrified by the technical level of their equipment. I could not even imagine that the decisions of the President of Teleradio-Moldova are typed in the 21st century on a typewriter from Soviet times (!)

You first led a TV station that asserted itself in the market, and then you created a new one. Where did you encounter more difficulties, and what are the strengths and the weaknesses?

I accumulated useful experience while working at Pervii kanal v Moldove, but it is more interesting to me to work at TV7 where I started from scratch after a six-month break. I have accomplished a lot during nearly two years. Our programs "Cotidian" and "Segodnya v Moldove" ("Moldova Today") that are broadcast three times in the evening at two-hour intervals meet the standards of modern news programs. We can learn the truth about the country's reality from them. I think that other programs launched this fall are also qualitative. There are not so many of them as we would like, but our station is undoubtedly the youngest, most active and dynamic in the Moldovan television market about which you spoke a little earlier. We expect to do even more in the future.

What is currently happening at Pervii kanal v Moldove? They say that this station's activity does not entirely comply with the law.

I repeat that I recall my work at Pervyi kanal as a period of accumulating experience. As to things that happened after I left, I prefer not to comment. Such comments should be made by the Broadcasting Coordinating Council.

You established your station in cooperation with the Russian station NTV. Did this fact help you assert yourselves in the Moldovan market?

NTV has always distinguished itself among the Russian stations. It meets the requirements of informative television best of all. NTV is our official partner, and we consider our cooperation very fruitful. We will gain from this as will our Moscow partners, especially the TV viewers.

How much money is needed to start a TV station?

A lot of money is needed, much more than for starting a radio station, a publication or a news agency. With the same amount of money, one can start another type of business that would be less risky and would bring more profit. Therefore, one should think very carefully when deciding to open a TV station.

So, is television more of a business in Moldova?

Television is a good business everywhere in the world, but it is a rather risky business in Moldova... Nonetheless, it is a promising business.

What are the risks?

According to new legislation, broadcasters are granted licenses not for five but for seven years. This is good, but not even seven years is enough to redeem the investments and make a profit. Therefore, in order to develop television, one must make efforts to attract investment and to give guarantees to the investors that the risks are minimal. There are currently doubts in this regard.

How does competition among TV stations work?

There is neither normal competition nor cooperation. I tried once to establish a dialog among various stations, to set up a broadcasters' association to discuss the current problems of television. We would like, for instance, a civilized and accessible system for measuring the size of TV audiences. Our colleagues did not support us; each of

them looked for their own ways to develop one. This is the situation. Each of them solves their problems by themselves. However, when our colleagues have problems, we have helped them and we will always do so without expecting reciprocity.

You mentioned the need for a system of measuring the size of TV audiences. Such a system, nonetheless, exists. Are you satisfied with the results?

There is a common system for measuring audiences for seven TV stations. These are almost all central stations, except Moldova-1. This system is not perfect, but nobody contests its results, and this is already a positive thing. We are satisfied also because TV7 is in second place from the audience's perspective. A station not satisfied with the results must improve itself. If a station pays to measure audience size in order to appear in a more favorable light, that is its problem. Let us not forget that it is better to change one's face than to get angry with the mirror.

How developed is the advertising market in Moldova? Are the funds obtained from advertising sufficient to develop national television?

This market is developing, but its development depends on the economic situation in the country. At present, the national economy leaves much to be desired, and therefore one cannot rely on the funds obtained from advertising; they are not sufficient for the development of television or for opening new stations. There is almost no TV advertising in Moldova for cars although thousands of new cars are sold every year. Nor is there any for other products present in the market that should have budgets expressly for advertising.

Unfortunately, the Moldovan market is generally very limited. Television has to suffer for this reason because television costs in Paris, Moscow or Bucharest are almost identical. The difference in incomes is, however, very high. Nevertheless, there are enough optimists working in television, and they firmly believe that better times will come.

***For conformity:
Igor VOLNIȚCHI***

COMMENT

On the Broadcasting Law of the Autonomous Administrative Unit Gagauz-Yeri Law No.66-XXVIII/III Effective 10 July 2007

1. The Provisions in the Broadcasting Code on the Legal Status of Teleradio-Găgăuzia and its Reorganization into a Regional Public Broadcaster

The Moldovan Parliament passed the Broadcasting Code of Moldova (the Code) on 27 July 2006. It was published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova in issue No.131-133 of 18 August 2006 and became effective on the day of publication. In drafting and passing the Code, the aim was to align national broadcasting legislation with European and international standards. The Code includes 68 articles and is structured into 9 chapters: Chapter I General Provisions; Chapter II Principles of Audiovisual Communication; Chapter III Publicity, Teleshopping and Sponsorship; Chapter IV Licenses; Chapter V Control and Sanctions; Chapter VI Broadcasting Coordinating Council; Chapter VII Public Broadcasters; Chapter VIII Private Broadcasters; and Chapter IX Final and Transitory Provisions.

Article 2 part (d) defines “public broadcaster” as a national or regional broadcasting institution with the status of legal public entity that serves society, that has an independent editorial policy and the activities of which are supervised by society. Relevant regulations on the legal status of Moldovan public broadcasters are contained in Chapter VII in articles 50–65. Most of these provisions regulate the activity of the national public broadcaster, the National Public Broadcasting Institution Teleradio-Moldova (NPBI). Only one article (number 65) contains provisions on the legal status of regional public broadcasters: “(1) The regional public broadcaster Teleradio-Găgăuzia functions in TAU Gagauz-Yeri in accordance with this Code as decided by its People’s Assembly. (2) The regional public broadcaster will function in the districts on the left side of Nistru River after the settlement of the Transnistrian issue as decided by the regional public authorities.”

Article 65 paragraph (1) is, however, not the only provision of the Code on the activity of Teleradio-Găgăuzia. The need for additional provisions became obvious as it was necessary to avoid at least three situations that would have eventually posed a threat to the integrity of the Code.

a) A restrictive interpretation of Article 65 paragraph (1) was possible in which Teleradio-Găgăuzia could be considered as liquidated from the moment of passing of the Code (“... functions... as decided by its People’s Assembly...”). Article 43 paragraph (2) of the Broadcasting Law of 10 July 2007 of Gagauz-Yeri (No.66-XXVIII/III) (the Law) repealed the deci-

sion of the People’s Assembly of Gagauzia of 20 December 2002 (No.377-XXXVII/II) to establish Teleradio-Gagauzia and the decision of the Executive Committee of Gagauzia of 13 January 2003 (No.1/8) to establish a state broadcaster. Under such conditions, the existence of the regional public broadcaster Teleradio-Găgăuzia could not be attested from a legal point of view.

- b) A regional public broadcaster (Teleradio-Găgăuzia) could be established while at the same time the existing state broadcasting company (Teleradio-Găgăuzia) was preserved thus delaying the transformation of the state broadcaster into a public one. This idea was used by certain high Moldovan state officials to delay the reorganization of NPBI.
- c) Article 65 paragraph (1) could be declared inapplicable which happens frequently with Moldovan legislation because of a lack of enforcement mechanisms and terms.

To speed up the process of transforming Teleradio-Găgăuzia into a regional public broadcaster, the Moldovan Parliament included a number of provisions in Article 68 of the Code both on the broadcaster’s activity in the period before reorganization and on the process of reorganization.

“(5) The Broadcasting Coordinating Council will initiate within two months from establishment control over existing program services and over the legality of license issuance, including to broadcasters founded and funded by local governments; will formulate recommendations on the mechanisms of making them legal so as to exclude their liquidation and will ensure creation of a pluralist environment for the development of the audiovisual media.

(6) The local governments that are founders of broadcasting institutions will issue within three months decisions on their reorganization in accordance with this Code.”¹

As to the obligations stipulated for the broadcasting regulatory authority in Article 68 paragraph (5) of the Code, the Broadcasting Coordinating Council (CCA) has formally fulfilled certain obligations but has not even undertaken others. CCA had the following obligations.

- (i) To “formulate recommendations on the mechanisms of making legal broadcasting institutions founded and funded by local governments.” CCA did not formulate “recommendations on the mechanisms of making Teleradio-Găgăuzia legal,” and only restricted its activity to sending out notification letters about the provisions of Article 68 paragraphs (5)-(6).

1. Author’s underlining

- (ii) To “initiate within two months from establishment control over existing program services and over the legality of license issuance, including to broadcasters founded and funded by local governments.” In this connection, we must mention that Teleradio-Găgăuzia functioned without a license during September and October 2007 as its license had expired. CCA adopted a decision to allow Teleradio-Găgăuzia to function before obtaining a new broadcasting license contrary to Article 68 paragraph (8) of the Code: “Broadcasting licenses issued to broadcasters before the coming into effect of this Code shall remain valid until expiration of the term for which they were granted.”
- (iii) To formulate recommendations regarding the mechanisms of making broadcasters founded and funded by local governments legal, so as to exclude their liquidation and to ensure the creation of a pluralist environment for the development of the audiovisual media.” This provision of Article 68 paragraph (5) viewed only from the aspect of transforming Teleradio-Găgăuzia into a regional public broadcaster imposed on CCA the obligation to develop new regulations in view of its reorganization. The interdiction to liquidate this institution, expressly laid down in the Code by the Moldovan Parliament, was to be included in the recommendations on the mechanisms for making Teleradio-Găgăuzia legal that were to be developed and adopted by the broadcasting regulatory authority.

It is obvious that CCA was to honor its obligation regarding the development and adoption of the recommendations on the mechanisms of making Teleradio-Găgăuzia legal in “due time” until the People’s Assembly of Gagauzia adopted the law and published it in the *Bulletin of Official Documents of Gagauzia No.5-6 of 27 July 2007*. The due time that CCA had was to be established in accordance with Article 68 paragraph (6)

2. Implementation of Broadcasting Code Provisions on the Reorganization of the State Company Teleradio-Găgăuzia into a Regional Public Broadcaster

Taking into account CCA’s lack of participation in the reorganization of Teleradio-Găgăuzia as well as the fact that the three-month period for this broadcaster’s reorganization expired long before the adoption of the law, the suspicions about the biased implementation of the Code by the People’s Assembly of Găgăuzia could be considered groundless.

We can only speak about some flaws and deficiencies in the law’s contents. Concerning reorganization into a regional public broadcaster, the People’s Assembly of Gagauzia did not insert, however, provisions into the law that would contradict the Code. Article 44 paragraph (3) of the law in accordance with Article 68 paragraph (6) of the Code provides that, “The local governments of Găgăuzia that are founders of broadcasting institutions will issue within three months decisions on the reorganization of such institutions in accordance with this law.” In such circumstances, the adoption by the People’s Assembly of Găgăuzia of Deci-

sion No.257-XXVIII/III of 20 July 2007 on Certain Measures to Implement the Broadcasting Law No.66-XXVIII/III of 10 July 2007 of TAU Gagauz-Yeri² by which the Executive Committee of Găgăuzia is obliged to liquidate the state company Teleradio-Găgăuzia (p.2) raises nothing but confusion and suspicions about the biased implementation of the Code and the law’s provisions. This decision of the People’s Assembly of Găgăuzia collides with both with the Code and with the law.

In our opinion, these flaws and deficiencies can still be eliminated, as the process of making Teleradio-Găgăuzia legal has not ended yet. There is the Law on the Reorganization of Teleradio-Găgăuzia into a Regional Public Broadcaster that presently does not even hold a broadcasting license. In these circumstances, it is necessary that CCA work efficiently with the People’s Assembly of Găgăuzia in view of implementing the guarantees provided by Article 68 paragraph (5).

Provisions on the activity of Teleradio-Găgăuzia can also be found in other articles of the Code in addition to Article 65 and Article 68.

3. Local Governments and Regional Governments: a Legal Issue in the Reorganization of Teleradio-Găgăuzia?

During the monitoring of the reorganization of Teleradio-Găgăuzia, a question arose whether the provisions of Article 68 paragraph (6) of the Code referred to the People’s Assembly of Găgăuzia and the Executive Committee of Găgăuzia. According to some opinions, these Gagauzian authorities are not local but rather are regional governments. The problem is due to the use of the term “local governments.”

The Code is a law of the Republic of Moldova; therefore, the meaning of this term must be interpreted in the context of national and not local legislation. Article1 of Law No.436-XVI of 28 December 2006 on Local Governments³ includes the concepts “local governments of the first level”⁴ and “local governments of the second level” as follows:

- local governments of the first level—public authorities taken as a whole that are constituted and function on the territory of villages (communes), towns (municipalities) to promote the interests and solve the problems of local communities;
- local governments of the second level—public authorities taken as a whole that are constituted and function on the territory of districts, the municipality of Chişinău, autonomous territorial units with special legal status to promote the interests and solve the problems of the population of the respective territorial administrative unit.

1. Bulletin of Official Documents of Gagauzia No.5-6 (66-67) of 27 July 2007.

2. Monitorul Oficial of the Republic of Moldova No.32-35 of 09 March 2007. Although it does not refer to the reorganization of Teleradio-Găgăuzia, we also introduce the term “local governments of first level” which is necessary to facilitate the understanding of some subsequent ideas in this study.

It is true that the 2006 Law on Local Governments was adopted after the Code came into force and became effective only in March 2007; however, Law No.123-XV of 18 March 2003 on Local Governments⁵, contains in Article 1 the same identical concepts (local governments of the first and second levels) as those in the new law. They were included in accordance with articles 109–111 of the Constitution as well as for their use in legislation in force.

4. Recommendations

People's Assembly of Găgăuzia:

- Repeal point 2 of the Decision of People's Assembly of Găgăuzia No.257-XXVIII/III of 20 July 2007 on Certain Measures to Implement the Broadcasting Law No.66-XXVIII/III of 10 July 2007 of TAU Gagauz-Yeri on the liquidation of State Company Teleradio-Găgăuzia as it contradicts Article 68 paragraph (6) of the Code and Article 44 paragraph (3) of the Law.

Executive Committee of Găgăuzia:

- Repeal the decision on the liquidation of the state company Teleradio-Găgăuzia adopted under point 2 of the Decision of

the People's Assembly of Găgăuzia of 20 July 2007 that contradicts Article 68 paragraph (6) of the Code and Article 44 paragraph (3) of the Law.

Coordinating Council of the Republic of Moldova:

- In its capacity as an “autonomous public authority responsible for the implementation and observance” of the Code and of the “international treaties on audiovisual media to which the Republic of Moldova is a party” (Article 39) and in its capacity as “guarantor of protection of the public interest in audiovisual communication on democratic principles and of program consumers' rights” (Article 41) is to:
 - act *ex officio* according to Article 10 paragraphs (1) and (4), Article 41 paragraph (1) letter (a) in view of observing Article 68 paragraphs (5)-(6) of the Code in the reorganization of Teleradio-Găgăuzia into a regional public broadcaster;
 - abandon the practice of adopting illegal decisions to approve broadcasting after the expiration of the broadcaster's license and until a new license is issued with regard to both Teleradio-Găgăuzia and to other public and private broadcasters.

Eugeniu RÎBCA

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